

# The SEARCA DIARY



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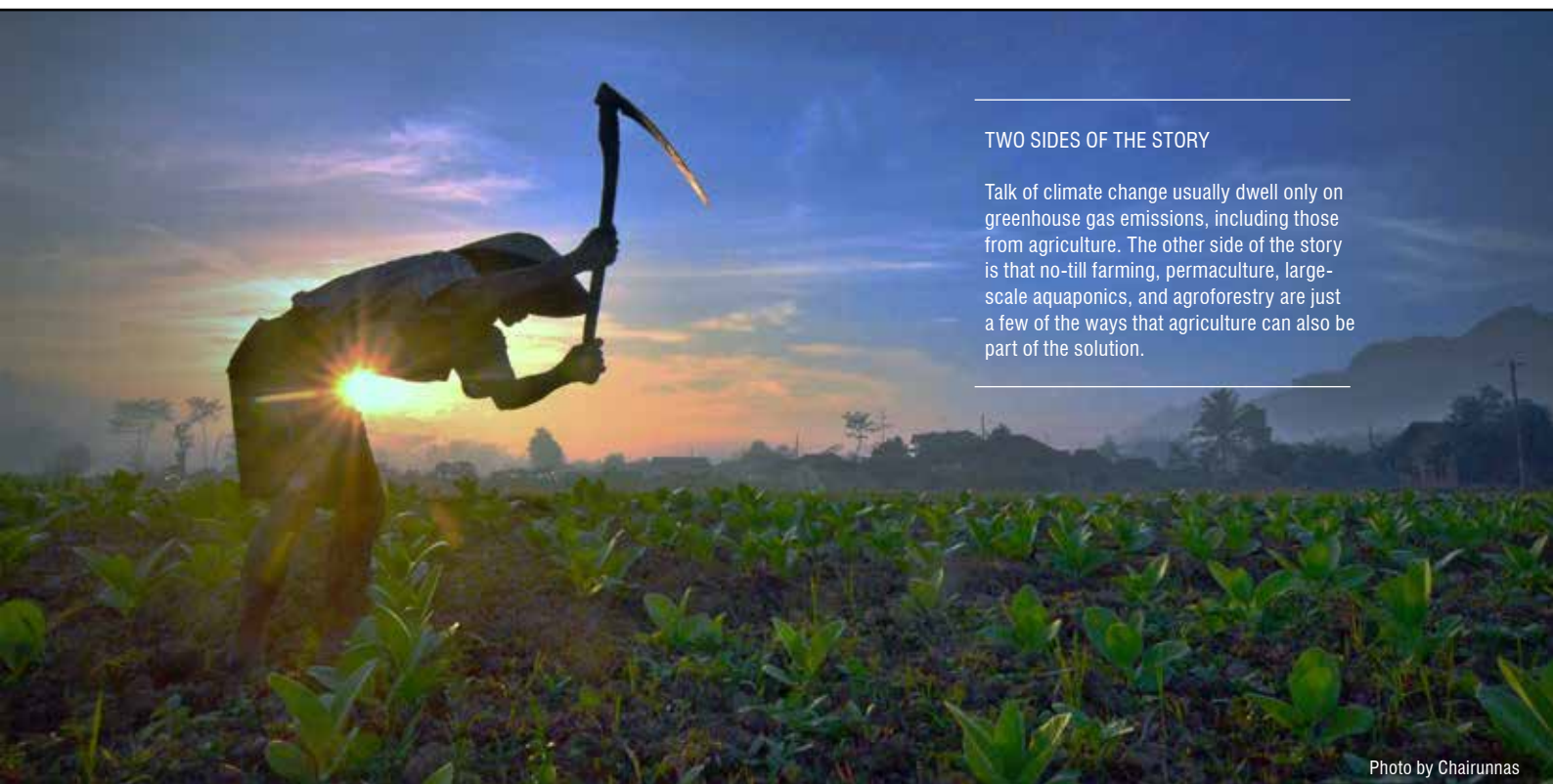


Photo by Chairunnas

## TWO SIDES OF THE STORY

Talk of climate change usually dwell only on greenhouse gas emissions, including those from agriculture. The other side of the story is that no-till farming, permaculture, large-scale aquaponics, and agroforestry are just a few of the ways that agriculture can also be part of the solution.

## 'Agriculture is part of solution to climate change'

Southeast Asia stands to lose a lot in terms of agricultural production and stability if there is no urgent, sustained action to implement climate change adaptation and mitigation in the region, warns Commissioner Naderev Saño of the Climate Change Commission of the Philippines during a knowledge event held at SEARCA.

Inaction to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change will threaten agricultural production in the ASEAN region, with most of Southeast Asia risking to lose up to seven percent of its total gross domestic product (GDP) by the next century, which is more than twice the global average, Mr. Saño said, citing global development reports.

At the very core, the issue comes down to two possible scenarios: food availability and hunger, Mr. Saño said. He added that changes in elements, such as local climate patterns, temperature, rainfall intensity, and daylight, will shift production cycles and ultimately, modify food prices and source of livelihood for most in the region.

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"The good news: Agriculture is a fundamental part of the solution to climate change," Mr. Saño said during his keynote at SEARCA's *Regional Knowledge Sharing Writeshop on Climate Change Adaptation in Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD)* held on 15-17 April 2015.

The event gathered 18 experts and project focal persons from four Southeast Asian countries and five international agencies working on agriculture and climate change, who aim to produce a case story book highlighting best practices in sustainable agriculture.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, elaborated that the writeshop, co-organized by SEARCA and the Oscar M. Lopez Center for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Foundation, Inc. (OML Center), levels up SEARCA's knowledge management initiatives to bring together the collective efforts of participants from the Philippines and Southeast Asia as their shared contribution in building capacities in climate change adaptation toward inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) in Southeast Asia.

It was revealed during the workshop that of 28 crops grown in the Mekong Region, the cash crops coffee, common bean, maize, and potato will have less resilience to survive the prolonged drought or extreme flooding from typhoons, according to a 2014 report of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT).

Geographic information system (GIS) expert Louis Parker of CIAT's Asia Office said the 2014 study by CIAT used GIS-based climate data and EcoCrop Model, which also found that cassava, pigeon pea, groundnut, and coconut as "winner crops" or those that may survive the impacts of climate change.

In the Philippines, rice production has shifted in the plains of Luzon, with some areas experiencing



Dr. Kris Wyckhuys (left), cassava entomologist at CIAT, makes a point. Looking on (from right) are Dr. Vichien Kerdsuk and Ms. Catherine C. de Luna, researchers at Thailand's Khon Kaen University and the University of the Philippines Los Baños, respectively.

higher rice yield during the dry season than during the wet season.

Dr. Enrico C. Paringit, University of the Philippines Diliman professor, noted that initial results of his Light Detection and Ranging Technology (LiDAR) team's research show that rice yield in designated rice production zones of the municipality of Apalit in Pampanga province are submerged in water during the rainy season and this hinders rice productivity. An initial explanation is that prolonged retention of floodwaters causes surface flooding in rice fields planted with varieties that cannot withstand prolonged water submergence.

Educating stakeholders, including farmers, on how climate change will impact livelihood is also crucial to equip them with information for creating innovative solutions to pave the way for climate smart agriculture, noted Ms. Nelly Florida Riama of Indonesia, who completed a study on climate field schools in her country.

In his speech, Mr. Saño shared that according to global estimates, every one percent of GDP invested in climate change adaptation can produce savings of 10 percent in GDP avoided cost from climate impacts.

"This is a compelling argument for us to invest, especially among [agriculture-based] economies. Building resilience through mitigation is important but the climate-smart paradigm highlights the need for innovation to try new things. Let us see climate change as an opportunity to fight the defining issue of our generation," he said.



Mr. Stéphane Boukakia, agronomist at the French Agricultural Research Center for International Development (CIRAD), presents conservation agriculture initiatives in Cambodia.

"I commend SEARCA as one of the foremost institutions in developing knowledge not only in the region but globally. The concepts of ISARD are ideas whose time has come; and no power can stop an idea whose time has come. So I challenge all scientists and experts here today to go out there and change the world," Commissioner Saño concluded. (APValmero)

## THE SEARCA DIARY

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# SEARCA hosts France's ICT-Asia 2015

SEARCA hosted this year's workshop of the Regional ICT-Asia Program of France—billed “ICT-Asia 2015”—which was held to enhance the capability of Asian countries in the field of information and communication technology (ICT).

ICT-Asia 2015 was jointly organized by the French government through its embassy in the Philippines and Delegation for Regional Cooperation-ASEAN and the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) Regional Science Bureau for Asia and the Pacific based in Jakarta, Indonesia; and hosted by SEARCA together with the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

The regional workshop looks to strengthen, on the basis of mutual benefit, high-level scientific cooperation on ICT with emerging and developed Asian nations.

Held on 25-26 May 2015, the workshop was graced by His Excellency Gilles Garachon, Ambassador of France to the Philippines, who said he is particularly glad that this workshop is held in Los Baños, “valuing the high-level quality of research that I personally observed in the country, especially in the field of information and communication technologies. This is the reason why I wish to see an increase in the participation of the Philippine scientists in the next ICT program.”

“Being aware of the climate change issue and the extreme vulnerability of the Philippines, the French Embassy supports different projects on biodiversity and environment protection, agricultural conservation, and risk modeling in the Philippines,” he added.

For her part, Dr. Amelia P. Guevara, Undersecretary for Research and Development, Department of Science and Technology (DOST)

of the Philippines, commended the gathering of bilateral partners. Noting that ICT has become ubiquitous and integrated in daily life, she cited DOST programs that are making full use of ICT.

The opportunity for UPLB scientists and researchers to be part of this conference is most welcome, said Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr., UPLB Chancellor. He shared that UPLB has created interdisciplinary study centers dedicated to producing knowledge and innovations for the university's areas of research using ICT. He added that UPLB is “proud to have successfully integrated the use of ICT into our various curricular programs and public service initiatives.”

Also speaking at the opening program, Prof. Kanchana Kanchanasut, Vice President for Research of Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), emphasized the need for more participation in climate change research.

On the other hand, contributions of ICT to fostering regional cooperation and its vital role in disaster risk reduction and management were shared by Mr. André de Bussy, Counselor for Regional Cooperation for the ASEAN of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, thanked all participating researchers for their enthusiasm to share their research and seek collaboration in the meeting. He affirmed that SEARCA looks forward to working with them in a productive synergy on the application of ICT in science and technology toward shared aspirations for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other developing countries.

Dr. Luc le Calvez, Director, Office for Southeast Asia of the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), also encouraged those present to collaborate with CNRS, while Dr. Jean-Pascal Torretton, Representative in Vietnam and Regional Coordinator for Asia of Institut de Recherche



Ambassador Gilles Garachon



Dr. Amelia P. Guevara



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr.



Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr.

pour le Développement (IRD), affirmed that his institution shares the mandate of ICT-Asia to help developing countries by cultivating research development.

Held annually, ICT-Asia contributes to regional integration by driving a search for excellence and support for scientific communities in Asia, with a strong focus on the ASEAN. ICT-Asia 2015 focused on four themes: Climate Change Modeling and Monitoring, Disaster Risk Reduction, ICT Applications to Food Security, and Urban and Rural Informatics.

ICT experts from France, ASEAN Member States, Japan, South Korea, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka were among the official participants of the regional workshop. Representatives from French and Asian public and private institutions supporting research and development (R&D), regional cooperation and networking in ICT field also participated.

Organizers said the workshop is expected to strengthen a Franco-regional network in ICT and increase the participation of Filipino and other ASEAN scientists in the ICT program. The project proposals presented at ICT-Asia 2015 are envisaged to eventually lead to long-lasting trilateral cooperation and collaboration with international research teams. (LLDDomingo)



The participants and organizers of ICT-Asia 2015

## SEARCA tapped to mainstream CCA in Phl agriculture

MANILA, Philippines—The Department of Agriculture (DA) of the Philippines, in partnership with SEARCA and the University of the Philippines Los Baños Foundation, Inc. (UPLBFI), has launched the project titled *Strengthening Implementation of Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA)*.

### AMIA defines national framework

At the inception meeting held on 24 April 2015 at the DA-Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), Dr. Alicia G. Ilaga, Director, DA Systems-Wide Climate Change Office (SWCCO), said AMIA defines DA's national framework in addressing climate change in agriculture and serves as the umbrella program covering climate change across all programs, functions, and agencies at DA. AMIA also addresses the key considerations in dealing with climate change in agriculture.

Dr. Ilaga elaborated that AMIA is one of DA's seven systems-wide mainstreaming programs at both the strategic and operational levels across agencies and programs. This means transforming systems, adjusting development programs/projects, and capacitating people to achieve efficiency at all levels of implementation.

Mr. Johnson P. Mercader, Project Team Leader, thanked Dr. Ilaga for providing the consultants with DA's insights and expectations from the AMIA project. His colleagues in the project who attended the meeting were Dr. Daylinda B. Cabanilla, Dr. Esteban C. Godilano, Dr. Saturnina

C. Halos, Dr. Tolentino B. Moya, and Dr. Eliseo R. Ponce. Ms. Dorcas V. Trinidad, Project Coordinator, represented UPLBFI.

SEARCA was represented in the inception meeting by Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, Program Head, and Ms. Rosario Bantayan, Program Specialist, both of the Knowledge Management Department; and Dr. Lope B. Santos III, Program Specialist and Officer in Charge; Ms. Nancy M. Landicho-de Leon, Program Specialist; and Ms. Imelda L. Batangantang, Program Associate, all of the Project Development and Technical Services (PDTs).

### Strategic planning vs. climate change

On 29-30 June 2015, regional technical directors and climate change representatives of the DA Regional Field Offices (RFOs) in Regions 6, 7, and 8 gathered in Cebu City for a workshop on *Landscape Planning and Yolanda Strategic Plan*, so named after one of the strongest tropical storms ever recorded (also known as Haiyan), which devastated said regions when it hit the Philippines in November 2013.

The workshop articulated the deliverables, process, participation, and general timetables related to the AMIA Project 1 and its landscape planning component. The participants prepared a detailed program of work for each region affected by Typhoon Yolanda. They looked into the key indicators on the biophysical and socioeconomic dimensions of resiliency in landscape planning.



Participants of the workshop on the AMIA-Project 1 Landscape Planning and Yolanda Strategic Plan held on 29-30 June 2015 at the Cebu Parklane International Hotel in Cebu City, Philippines.

## SEARCA study bags best paper

CLARK FREEPORT, Philippines—The paper titled "Improving the Agricultural Insurance Program to Enhance Resilience to Climate Change: Evidence from Corn Farmers in the Philippines" by Dr. Jose M. Yorobe, Jr. and Ms. Pilipinas M. Luis won Best Paper in the Socioeconomics Category at the *23rd Federation of Crop Science Societies of the Philippines Conference*, a biennial national scientific meeting where developments in crop science research and development (R&D) and policy issues are presented.

The winning paper presents the results of the study titled *Improving the Corn Insurance Program to Enhance Resilience to Climate Change* funded by SEARCA and the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) led by Dr. Yorobe with Ms. Luis as research assistant. Dr. Yorobe is Professor at the Department of Agricultural Economics, College of Economics and Management, University of the Philippines Los Baños, while Ms. Luis is Research Assistant at SEARCA's R&D Department. (PMLuis)

AMIA Project 1 Consortium members who participated in the workshop were Mr. Mercader; Dr. Ponce; Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz, Disaster Assessment Specialist; Dr. Ma. Victoria O. Espaldon, Program Development Specialist; and Ms. Arlene B. Inocencio, Monitoring Evaluation Specialist. Ms. de Leon and Ms. Batangantang represented SEARCA again along with Mr. Alvin G. Tallada and Mr. Jerrel Edric B. Mallari, both of PDTs. (Reports from NMLandicho-de Leon)

## Farmers train on native chicken production

BATAK, Philippines—SEARCA, in partnership with Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU), organized and facilitated a *Training Course on Organic and Scientific Native Chicken Production* attended by 38 farmer-cooperators from this city.

The training was conducted on 27 April 2015 at MMSU as part of the project titled *Production of Organic Feeds for Native Chicken: A Pilot Corn/*

*Sorghum + Cowpea Intercropping Scheme Integrated with Village Feed Milling and Native Chicken Production* funded by the Philippine Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) and implemented by SEARCA.

The course topics included an overview of Philippine native animals, their status and potentials; science-enhanced native chicken

production; health management of native chicken; and production of feeds and organic fertilizer.

Dr. Agapita J. Salces, a poultry nutritionist and animal breeder, and Dr. Jezie A. Acorda, a veterinarian, served as the lead lecturers. Technical assistance during the training were provided by Dr. Arsenio D. Calub, Project Leader; and Ms. Corazon Diana A. Pastor, a poultry breeder, and Mr. Mario I. Remolacio, an agronomist, both of MMSU. Ms. Evelyn H. Juanillo, DA-BAR Executive Assistant, was also on hand. (MBAmanza)



## CIAT, SEARCA to cooperate in ARD

SEARCA and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) Asia Regional Office recently signed a memorandum of understanding to pursue common education, training, and research objectives in various areas of agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia.

The MOU enabled SEARCA to participate in CIAT's *Regional Partners' Forum* held on 7-8 April 2015 in Hanoi, Vietnam. The forum aimed to refine and validate CIAT Asia's regional R&D framework, and identify priority research areas and projects/activities for collaboration, and recommended the next steps in 2015.

Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, SEARCA Program Head for Research and Development, joined the panel discussion on *Building Resilience Through Climate Smart Agriculture and Systems Research*. In her brief commentary, she emphasized commonalities in the priority thrusts of CIAT and SEARCA and the possible areas of complementation such as linking CIAT researches with the work of the SEARCA-initiated Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) and SEARCA PhD scholars through joint research, collaboration in learning and knowledge events, and sharing and development of knowledge products.

Also under the MOU, two CIAT scientists, a geospatial analyst and an entomologist, participated in SEARCA's *Regional Knowledge Sharing Writeshop on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD)* held on 15-17 April 2015 at SEARCA (See related story on page 1). Dr. Kris Andre Georges Wyckhuys and Mr. Louis Parker of CIAT Asia were case presenters during the writeshop



Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (right), SEARCA Acting Program Head for Research and Development, discusses with Dr. Leocadio S. Sebastian, CGIAR CCAFS SEA Regional Coordinator, the collaboration on the regional consultation workshop jointly organized with CIAT and CGIAR CCAFS SEA.

and authors of case stories that they will contribute to the Case Book on CCA.

SEARCA and CIAT took their partnership to the next level by co-organizing, in cooperation with the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security for Southeast Asia (CGIAR CCAFS SEA), the *Regional Consultation Workshop towards an Umbrella Program on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (CChAM) in Southeast Asia (SEA) for an Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD)*. (See related story on page 6) (BMBurgos)

## Regional study on inclusive agribusiness underway

SEARCA is implementing a study titled *Landscape: Inclusive Agribusiness in Southeast Asia* funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

The study aims to examine and share evidence of emerging inclusive agribusiness innovation trends in the ASEAN region with specific focus on Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam (where the Grow Asia Chapter is being organized). It identifies relevant players and their roles and activities in the region related to inclusive agribusiness. The research provides an analysis of effective practices and their implications for future investments, policy decisions, and partnership strategies.

The results of the study will serve as inputs to the *Inclusive Agribusiness Southeast Asia Roundtable* slated on 9-10 September 2015 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The forum will be convened by the Southeast Asia Inclusive



Ms. Michaela Cosijn (left) and Ms. Jennifer Kelly (second from left) of FSI discuss the progress of the study titled *Landscape: Inclusive Agribusiness in Southeast Asia* with (from right) Dr. Nerlita M. Manalili, study leader; and Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, Program Head, and Mr. Henry M. Custodio, Program Specialist, both of SEARCA's R&D Department.

Agribusiness Roundtable Partnership, which is an initiative of Grow Asia, Food Systems Innovation (FSI), Seas of Change, Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, and DFAT.

Dr. Nerlita M. Manalili, a noted agribusiness specialist in the region and former SEARCA Head for Research and Development (R&D), is conducting the scoping study in coordination with the Center's R&D Department currently headed by Dr. Bessie M. Burgos.

Dr. Burgos represents SEARCA in the informal Inclusive Agribusiness Reference Group that supports the upcoming roundtable. Said group

provides strategic advice on macro-regional trends, challenges, and opportunities affecting inclusive agribusiness in the region.

Ms. Jennifer Kelly and Ms. Michaela Cosijn of FSI visited SEARCA on 16 June 2015 to discuss the progress of the research and preparations for the roundtable. FSI is a research for development (R4D) initiative that is a partnership between DFAT, CSIRO, and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). (BMBurgos)

## SEARCA awards 6 professorial chair grants

A Malaysian and five Filipino professors were awarded the SEARCA Regional Professorial Chair in recognition of their outstanding achievements that contribute to inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) in Southeast Asia.

Awarded in May 2015, the new professorial chairholders, their institutional affiliation, and title of their professorial lecture are as follows:

- Prof. Dr. Ir. Mohd Sapuan Bin Salit, Professor of Composite Materials and Head of the Institute of Tropical Forestry and Forest Products at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), “Sugar Palm Fiber Reinforced Biodegradable Sugar Palm Starch Composites: Development and Characterization”
- Dr. Dennis S. Mapa, Professor and Dean of the School of Statistics at the University of the Philippines Diliman, “Relation of Rice, Job Misery, and Hunger Incidence Using an Econometric Approach”
- Dr. Augusto E. Serrano, Professor at the Institute of Aquaculture, College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, UP Visayas (UPV), “Use of Algae in the Feed Formulation for Aquaculture Species”
- Dr. Victor B. Ella, Professor 12 and UP Scientist II of the Land and Water Resources Division, College of Engineering and Agro-Industrial Technology at UP Los Baños (UPLB), “Conservation Agriculture and Its Relevance to Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia”
- Dr. Teodoro C. Mendoza, Professor of Crop Science at the UPLB College of Agriculture, “Reducing the High Energy Bill and Carbon Footprint for an Energy and Climate-Change Compliant Sugarcane Production”
- Dr. Jezie A. Acorda, Professor of Veterinary Medicine at the UPLB College of Veterinary Medicine, “Role of Acupuncture in Increasing Productive Efficiency of Water Buffaloes”

The SEARCA Regional Professorial Chair has evolved from the professorial chair awarded exclusively to UPLB faculty since 1974 until the program was expanded at the turn of the millennium to recognize faculty in other UP campuses. In 2011, it further expanded to recognize exemplary academics in Southeast Asian universities. The award comes with a US\$5,000 prize. (Report from JSLaranas)

## SEARCA and partners craft umbrella program on climate change

HANOI, Vietnam—An Umbrella Program on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (CChAM) for Southeast Asia 2015–2020 was developed by SEARCA and its partners in a three-day regional consultation workshop held here.

The umbrella program is envisioned as a platform for convergence and collaboration at the regional and sub-regional levels, where institutions can work together, pool resources, and address gaps or move in directions where their joint efforts provide a strategic advantage for climate resiliency in Southeast Asia.

It is anticipated that the synergy created by the umbrella program can produce added value—in terms of new knowledge, technologies, capacities, and processes—to what is currently being generated by institutions working on their own specific research agenda.

SEARCA led the regional workshop with partners and co-organizers CGIAR Research on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security Southeast Asia Program (CCAFS-SEA) and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). It was also supported by the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC), and Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN).

Held on 12–14 May 2015, the workshop was attended by 59 participants from the UC, selected partner universities in countries that belong to the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), relevant government agencies from Southeast Asia, nongovernmental organizations, research and development organizations, donor or funding agencies, and the organizing agencies.

After the workshop, the participants had a more focused perspective and understanding of issues and gaps in climate change policy, research, capacity development and knowledge management (KM) in the context of Southeast Asia or ASEAN.

The participants agreed on the conceptual framework for collaborative research, capacity development, and KM on CChAM. Aside from producing the draft Umbrella Program on CChAM for Southeast Asia 2015–2020, they mapped capabilities and needs of institutional partners to optimize synergy and support as well as maximize benefits. They also discussed resource mobilization strategies to implement the program.



Prof. Dr. Nguyen Van Tuat, Vice President of the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences (VAAS), welcomes the workshop participants.



Dr. Tran Van Dien, Rector of Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry and Country Representative of Vietnam to the SEARCA Governing Board, gives his message during the opening ceremonies.



Dr. Le Quoc Doanh, Vice Minister of Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), expressing his thanks to SEARCA and other partners during the closing ceremonies.

The major thematic areas identified for collaboration under the Umbrella Program are as follows:

- Theme 1: Assessing climate change impacts and risks for policy, plans, and investments
- Theme 2: Advancing low-carbon agriculture and rural development
- Theme 3: Enhancing pro-active adaptation to climate change, variability, and extremes
- Theme 4: Enabling policies and governance for climate-resilient agriculture and rural communities

Overall, the draft Umbrella Program on CChAM consists of four thematic areas, 21 sub-themes, and about 70 projects/activities.

The SEARCA delegation to the workshop was led by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director. With him were the heads of SEARCA's core programs, namely: Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (R&D), Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz (KM), and Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (Graduate Education and Institutional Development). They were accompanied by Dr. Mariliza V. Ticsay, Unit Head for Knowledge Resources; and Ms. Carmen Nyhria G. Rogel, Program Specialist, and Ms. Rochella B. Lapitan, Program Support Staff, both of the R&D Department.

The technical coordinator of the workshop was Dr. Juan M. Pulhin, Professor at the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Forestry and Natural Resources and SEARCA Adjunct Fellow. (CNGRogel)



## 1st Myanmar SFRT Grantees Forum held

NAY PYI TAW, Myanmar—Yezin Agricultural University (YAU) and SEARCA jointly organized the first *Myanmar Seed Fund for Research and Training (SFRT) Grantees Forum* to enable the grant recipients to share the results of their research with stakeholders and the general public.

Through the SFRT, SEARCA has been providing researchers, scientists, and development practitioners with start-up funds to enable them to conduct research or disseminate knowledge, and enhance their chances of securing long-term support from donor agencies. Since the launch of the SFRT in 2005, 83 grants have been awarded, benefitting nine countries in Southeast Asia.

Since two of the six Myanmar recipients of SFRT grants were awarded this fiscal year, only four grantees presented their research results at the forum. Their names and institutional affiliation, year awarded, and the titles of their research are as follows:

- Dr. Khin Oo, Department of Agronomy, YAU (FY 2005-2006); “Impacts of Cyclone Nargis on Livelihoods and Food Security in Selected Areas in Bogalay, Myanmar”
- Dr. Dolly Kyaw, Department of Economics, YAU (FY 2010-2011); “Ecosystem Approach to Sustainable Farming System and Assessment of Farm Households’ Food Security in Nautmouk Township (Magway Region-Dry Zone) in Myanmar”
- Dr. Thanda Kyi, Department of Agricultural Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation

(MOAI) (FY 2010-2011); “Assessment of Vulnerability and Risk for Adaptation of Rural Farmers in Central Dry Zone of Myanmar: Farm Level Case Study”

- Dr. Nyo Nyo, Department of Horticulture, YAU (FY 2011-2012); “Horticultural Produce Supply System and Quality Management in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar”

One of the new grantees, Dr. Theingi Myint of the YAU Department of Agricultural Economics, presented his research plan titled “Determinants of Food Security of Vulnerable Rural Households at the Central Region, Myanmar” during the grantees forum.

The other new grantee is Ms. Seinn Seinn Mu of MOAI. Her research plan is titled “Impact of Rural Out Migration on the Resilience of Agricultural System of Rice Farmers in Lower Ayeyarwady Delta, Myanmar.”

Held on 29 May 2015, the forum was attended by YAU officials, faculty, staff, and graduate students led by their Rector Dr. Myo Kywe; staff of MOAI Department of Planning; and SEARCA representatives led by Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, Program Head for Research and Development. Dr. Myint Thuzar, YAU Director for International Relations and SEARCA alumna, assisted SEARCA in organizing the forum.



Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (leftmost), SEARCA Program Head for Research and Development, presents a token to Dr. Khin Oo (second from left), an SFRT grantee, while (from right) Dr. Thanda Kyi and Dr. Dolly Kyaw, also SFRT grantees, look on.

In welcoming the participants, Dr. Myo Kywe said he hopes the event will stimulate learning and sharing. He also thanked SEARCA for co-organizing the forum with his university as well as for the institutional development assistance it has extended to YAU. He said he looks forward to a continuing collaboration with SEARCA.

On behalf of SEARCA, Dr. Burgos reiterated the Center’s continuing support to YAU, particularly through its Institutional Development Assistance Program. She talked about SEARCA’s programs that are open to Myanmar nationals, including those that could help them develop and implement research projects and disseminate results. She also informed them of upcoming SEARCA events that are relevant to YAU and MOAI.

Ms. Carmen Nyhria G. Rogel, SEARCA Program Specialist for Research and Development, gave an overview of the SFRT Program, including its rationale, objectives, and other features of the grant. (Report from CNGRogel)

## 2015 UC Summer School kicks off

LOS BAÑOS, Philippines—Sixteen graduate students and young faculty members from agricultural universities in Southeast Asia gathered at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) for the *Postgraduate Course in Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture in Southeast Asia*. Hosted by the UPLB Graduate School, the three-week summer school opened on 24 June 2015.

“This post graduate course was one of SEARCA’s new initiatives under its new strategic plan, and was eventually taken in by the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC), a network of top agricultural universities in Southeast Asia committed to share academic



Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (front row, third from right), SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development, with the 16 participants of the 2015 UC Summer School.

expertise and information,” Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, explained during the opening ceremony.

Initiated by SEARCA in 1989, the UC currently comprises five members in Southeast Asia: Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) and Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Indonesia, Kasetsart

University (KU) in Thailand, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), and UPLB. Outside the region, the UC also has an associate member, that is, Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI) in Japan; and two affiliate members: University

**2015 UC Summer School/ to page 11**

## 4 countries represented in ISARD project dev't training

Twenty-four university researchers, development practitioners, and faculty members representing five teams from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and the Philippines (Oriental Mindoro and Leyte) took the challenge to draw up their respective projects in inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development during a five-day training-workshop at SEARCA.

In partnership with the Fenner School of Environment and Society of the Australian National University (ANU) and the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Human Ecology (UPLB-CHE), SEARCA offered the training-workshop on *Developing, Planning, and Implementing Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD) Projects* on 22-26 June 2015 at its headquarters here.

Among the 24 participants were local government stakeholders in two ISARD pilot sites of SEARCA, a national agency researcher, and a team of facilitators from UPLB-CHE.

With its Tenth Five-Year Plan (2014-2019), SEARCA is championing ISARD in the Southeast Asian region. After more than 40 years of institutional and capacity strengthening in agricultural and rural development (ARD) in Southeast Asia, SEARCA is now promoting development of effective models of ISARD. The training-workshop focused on: (1) innovative and systems approach in the management of ISARD; and (2) adaptive project management life cycle for ISARD.

Dr. Saguiguit said SEARCA hopes to contribute “not just to refining models and approaches that redound to relevant policies and programs in agricultural and rural development, but more specifically, to tangible outcomes toward food and nutrition security in selected ISARD pilot sites through research and development, capacity building, and knowledge management.”

Prof. Wilfredo B. Carada of the UPLB College of Public Affairs and Development and the Training-Workshop Technical Coordinator, explained that the learning event is composed of two modules. Module 1 is about



Mr. Federico Davila (second from right) of ANU explains the expected output of a workshop exercise to the participants from Thailand and the Philippines.

an innovative and system-based framework in the management of ISARD, while Module 2 focuses on management of ISARD programs/projects.

On the first day of the training-workshop, participants presented the agricultural commodity systems in their areas, which was their pre-training assignment. On 25 June, they visited the farm and the farmer-cooperators of Putho-Tuntungin, Los Baños, Laguna, who are beneficiaries of the project “Enhancing Gender Sensitive Organic Vegetable Production in Low-Income Communities of Los Baños, Laguna.” This project is under the program “Enhancing Gender-Sensitive Sustainable Agriculture and Aquatic S&T-based Livelihood Enterprises in Los Baños,” which is a collaboration between the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD) and the local government unit of Los Baños. (DJMPausal)

### How can ASEAN become/ from page 16

“ASEAN is a food basket but there are a lot of hungry, undernourished people,” she added.

Dr. Moench-Pfanner said one way to address “hidden hunger” in Asia is to promote nutrition security and dietary diversity. Mothers can nudge kids to eat more greens and have the right ratio of carbohydrates and protein in the diet to address stunting and deficiency in Vitamin A, iron, and other micronutrients.

#### Profitable farming

The second step toward food security in ASEAN is to move from subsistence farming to entrepreneurial farming, Dr. Teng said.

Across the globe, farming communities have a declining and aging population. In 1998, the average age of farmers was pegged between 50 to 60 years old in the US, Canada, Korea, and

Japan; this is significantly older than the average of 36 to 51 years old three decades earlier.

“Technology on its own is not enough. Farmers need both tools and a proper business model using this tools to earn a decent livelihood and profit,” Dr. Teng explained.

“This can help attract young people to make a career in agriculture like what is happening in North America where the young see farm work as a business. And this is where entrepreneurs can come in,” he added.

Farmers are inherently good technology testers and adopters. Extending this to involve farmers in developing and testing market-responsive agribusiness models can help prove if something works, Dr. Teng said.

#### Enabling policy

The third step crucial for ASEAN’s path towards food security is creating a policy environment that nurtures all the important phases of food

supply chain. A nurturing policy environment, additionally, is needed to promote climate adaptation mechanisms in building resilient farms, Dr. Teng said.

From a business exports policy perspective, the future for ASEAN in the agribusiness sector looks bright when it learns to be able to move beyond becoming a common base for production and market to one that helps add value to its products and helps promote integration within the region and other regions through multimodal logistics, noted Dr. Larry Chee-Yong Wong, Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies in Malaysia.

“The challenge for ASEAN is to create a situation when the whole is more than the sum of its parts and focusing on these three: establishing food availability, infusing entrepreneurship among farmers, and fostering a nurturing policy environment can make it a leader in ensuring food security for its population,” Dr. Teng concluded. (APValmero)





Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH officials, namely: Dr. Gerd Fleischer (second from right), Head of Competence Center Agricultural Trade, Economy Standards; Dr. Thomas Breuer (leftmost), Head of Sector Project Agricultural Trade and Agricultural Value Chain; and Dr. Max-Johannes Baumann (second from left), Director of the Environment and Rural Development (EnRD) Program, visited SEARCA on 9 June 2015 to learn about the Center's programs and activities, particularly its involvement in enhancing and packaging the Training of Trainers' Curriculum for the Better Rice Initiatives in the Philippines. They were received by Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas (third from left), Deputy Director for Administration; Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (third from right), Program Head for Research and Development; and other program heads.



Nine staff of the Procurement and General Services Unit and Facilities Management Unit under the Administrative Management Office of the SEAMEO Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH) visited SEARCA on 13 May 2015 to learn about SEARCA's best practices as part of the benchmarking activities. They were given a briefing on SEARCA's operations related to their functional areas by Ms. Ma. Obdulia B. Jolejole, Unit Head for Facilities Management, and Mr. Ricardo A. Menorca, Unit Head for General Services.



Old colleagues Dr. Herve Saint Macary (right), Deputy Director of the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development, and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (center), SEARCA Director, met anew when the French official visited SEARCA on 7 April 2015. With him was his daughter (left) who was born in the Philippines during his secondment to SEARCA in the 1980s to work on the SEARCA/GERDAT food legumes project's agronomic aspects, particularly nitrogen fixation in marginal soils.

## New Bruneian member of SEARCA GB named



Dr. Haji Mohd Zamri bin Haji Sabli, Acting Assistant Director of the Institute of Brunei Technical Education, Ministry of Education, has been appointed to a three-year term as the Country Representative of Brunei Darussalam to the SEARCA Governing Board (GB) effective 15 May 2015.

The GB is SEARCA's highest policymaking body. It is composed of representatives from each member country of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) who are nominated by their respective Ministers/Secretaries of Education and appointed by the SEAMEO Council.

Dr. Zamri succeeded Mr. Saiful Rizal bin Haji Marali, who served as Acting Principal of Wasan Vocational School, Ministry of Education. (LLDDomingo)

## SEARCA Director attends 57th APO GBM

BANGKOK, Thailand—Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, was among the observers invited to attend the *57th Governing Body Meeting (GBM)* of the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), a regional intergovernmental organization that aims to contribute to sustainable socioeconomic development of Asia and the Pacific through enhancing productivity.

Dr. Saguiguit was among the 56 delegates to the high-level meeting held on 27 April 2015, including APO directors and their advisers from 19 of its 20 member countries as well as officials of other organizations invited as observers.

SEARCA serves eight of the 20 APO member countries, namely: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, which are also SEAMEO member countries. Dr. Saguiguit's attendance to the meeting was an opportunity to explore possible collaborative initiatives between SEARCA and APO in areas of common interest.

Other organizations represented by the select group of observers that included Dr. Saguiguit were the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Pan African Productivity Association (PAPA), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), and the Singapore Productivity Association (SPA). (LLDDomingo)

## Phl delegation visits eco-towns in Japan

YOKOHAMA, Japan—The visit of a Philippine delegation, including one each representative from SEARCA and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), to several eco-town projects in four cities in Japan culminated here. From 18 to 21 May 2015, the delegation visited Kitakyushu, Kawasaki, Kyoto, and Yokohama.

The participants from LGUs included Hon. Mayor John Bongat (Naga City), Hon. Mayor Eugenio Lagasca, Jr. (San Fernando, Camarines Sur), Hon. Mayor Arturo Monday and Mr. Johanes Morales (Baganga, Davao Oriental), Hon. Councilor Danny Cruz (Cainta, Rizal), Ms. Federica Rentoy and Ms. Ma. Teresa M. Mariano (Quezon City), Ms. Gloria Buenaventura (Marikina City), Engr. William Menes (Milaor, Camarines Sur), Ms. Emilou Nuñez (Cateel, Davao Oriental), Mr. Ricardo Victor A. Velasco (Provincial Government of Davao Oriental), and Ms. Maria Angelica Monica Salud Mamuyac (Department of Interior and Local Government). SEARCA was represented by Dr. Lope B. Santos III, Program Specialist and Officer in Charge, Project Development and Technical Services.

The eco-town visit is an important component of the project being implemented by SEARCA titled *TA-8493 PHI: Climate Resilience and Green Growth in Critical Watersheds (46441-001)*, which is led by the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR).

The capacity building activity aimed to provide a learning opportunity for participating local chief executives or their representatives on how an eco-town can be established and sustained for climate change adaptation and green growth options. It also intended to enable the participants to identify and consider similar projects related to climate change adaptation (CCA) and green growth applicable in their respective local government units (LGUs). The visit was also an opportunity to explore sisterhood partnership arrangement with counterpart LGUs in Japan.

### What is an eco-town?

In Japan, an eco-town is the harmonization of ecological management and economic development where the focus is on addressing pollution and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through sustainable reuse and recycling carried out by the private and public sectors.

The eco-town project is an offshoot of the implementation of various legislations such as



The Philippine delegation visits Ecotown Center in Kitakyushu City, Japan.



The Philippine delegation observes the River basin Management and Ecotourism in Kyoto.

the Home Appliance Recycling Act, Construction Materials Recycling Act, Food Recycling Act, Green Purchasing Act, Establishing a Recycling-Oriented Society Act, and Promoting Effective Use of Resources Act, among others. Currently, there are 26 eco-town projects in Japan.

In the Philippines, an eco-town is described under the National Climate Change Action Plan 2011–2028 (NCCAP) as “a planning unit, composed of municipalities or a group of municipalities located within and in the boundaries of critical key biodiversity areas (forest, coastal/marine and fishery, or watersheds), highly vulnerable to climate change risks due to its geography, geographic location, and poverty situation.”

### Tour of eco-town projects

After a brief orientation at the Kitakyushu Eco-town Center, the delegation visited the recycling facilities of Nikon photocopier, medical wastes recycling, and the Environmental Bureau of Kitakyushu City.

Mayor John Bongat said “the delegation is very impressed with the eco-town projects in Kitakyushu” and that such initiative is worthy of emulation by other cities in the world.

Mr. Alexis Lapiz, CCC Eco-town Program Officer, commented that the eco-town project in Kitakyushu City is indeed a concrete example of how important it is to put in place a project with an enabling mechanism strategy (e. g., legislative and institutional) as a means to operationalize plans and programs, both at the national and local levels.

Meanwhile, Mr. Al Orolfo, Assistant Regional Director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resource (DENR) Region V, cited the importance of LGU and private sector partnership to realize the same model in the Philippines. He said that the tour is an eye-opener on how the convergence of the initiatives of all sectors can jumpstart the change towards the common goal.

The group was also given an orientation on the following eco-town projects: Riverbasin Management and Eco-Tourism in Kyoto, Paper Recycling Facility in Yokohama, Shonan-kaigan Erosion Control Forest in Kawasaki, and Kawasaki Environmental Research Institute. They also visited the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) in Yokohama where they were given a brief seminar on various CCA and mitigation initiatives being undertaken by IGES.

Dr. Ancha Srinivasan, ADB Principal Climate Change Specialist-Southeast Asia Department who also joined the trip to Japan said there are many possibilities of having joint undertakings between IGES and ADB TA 8493 with the Government of the Philippines (GOP), which may include sharing of information and best practices, conferences and workshops, as well as planning exercises in developing local climate change action road maps. He stressed the importance of strengthening the synergism and collaboration among different institutions in the region, in particular, the capacity building of LGUs towards CCA and green growth options. (Reports from SCWaniwan)



## SEARCA BIC joins int'l biotech communication forums

NAIROBI, Kenya—The Biotechnology Information Center (BIC) of SEARCA contributed to and learned from the presentations, discussions, and exercises of three international biotech communication events held at Safari Park Hotel here. The BIC is a special collaborative project of SEARCA and the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA).

Held from 10 to 16 April 2015, the series of events were the Alliance for Science Biotechnology Leadership Course (10-11 April), International Conference on Agricultural Biotechnology and Biosafety Communications (13-14 April), and ISAAA Annual Network Meeting (15-16 April). Ms. Maria Monina Cecilia A. Villena, Special Projects Coordinator, and Ms. Sophia M. Mercado, Project Associate, both of BIC, represented the SEARCA in said meetings.

The Biotechnology Leadership Course shared communication and campaign strategies and introduced Cornell University's Alliance for Science which was described as "a global coalition of scientists, farmers, NGOs, and

humanitarian organizations uniting to add a stronger voice for science and depolarize the charged debate around agri-biotech." The course tackled strategies such as capacity building and how it could be applied to promote agri-biotechnology acceptance among the public. Breakout sessions and exercises on strategic planning and campaign tactics were held. The training was attended by members of two international networks focused on knowledge sharing and education on agri-biotech: the ISAAA Network of BICs and Open Forum on Agricultural Biotechnology in Africa (OFAB).

The international conference centered on the theme "Agri-biotech communications and evolving trends" and addressed several points in biotech communication practices in different countries such as the approaches being used, the commonalities and areas of cooperation, effectiveness of different communication strategies, kinds of messages developed and how they are packaged, and their contribution to adoption of agricultural biotech in different countries. Experts on biotech and biosafety

communications from around the world presented lessons and experiences on stakeholder information needs, agri-biotech communication impacts, the use of new media and campaigns, and the evolving nature of "balance" and "evidence" in the field to more than 150 delegates from 30 countries in Asia, Africa, America, Latin America, and Europe.

A marketplace for biotech and biosafety information products and materials of SEARCA BIC and other partners and delegates was also set up during the conference.

A highlight of the conference was the launch of ISAAA's Brief 50 titled "Voices and Views: Why Biotech?" featuring essays about 32 individuals from all over the world who have followed the development of biotechnology and are convinced that it has a significant role in improving the quality of life. Ms. Villena and Ms. Mercado, are contributors of essays on Filipino biotech champions Dr. Emiliana Bernardo and Dr. Nina Gloriani. (Reports from SMMercado)



Ms. Maria Monina Cecilia A. Villena (second from left), Special Projects Coordinator, and Ms. Sophia M. Mercado (fifth from left), Project Associate, both of SEARCA BIC, with other authors of essays in ISAAA's Brief 50 titled "Voices and Views: Why Biotech?" during the launch at the International Conference on Agricultural Biotechnology and Biosafety Communications in Nairobi, Kenya.

### 2015 UC Summer School/ from page 7

of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada and Georg-August University of Göttingen in Germany. SEARCA serves as the consortium secretariat.

Among the UC members, UPLB is the first member to implement the Summer School, which is anticipated to rove from one UC member to another.

Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr., UPLB Chancellor, said the Summer School is part of UPLB's efforts towards internationalization, which is one of the top priorities under his leadership.

The Summer School is an accredited graduate course. Therefore, all participants can earn three credit units upon completion of the postgraduate course.

The resource persons and students of the Summer School are expected to exchange knowledge and share experiences, and eventually gain a better understanding of the diversity of cultural, economic, and ecological conditions in Southeast Asia as they bear on the objective of attaining food and nutrition security in the context of sustainable agriculture and rural development.

With support from the UC and SEARCA, graduate students and young faculty members from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines are attending the Summer School. Some of them are affiliated with UC members: IPB (2), UGM (3), UPM (2), KU (1), and UPLB (4). The others are from the Royal University of Agriculture in Cambodia (1) and Yezin Agricultural University in Myanmar (3). Both universities are beneficiaries of SEARCA's Institutional Development Assistance Program. (Report from JSLaranas)

## Proposals crafted to push Indonesia social forestry agenda

JAKARTA, Indonesia—The ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) Strategic Response Fund (ASRF) conducted a writeshop to come up with project proposals that would act on the needs of ASFN Focal Points in addressing emerging issues related to social forestry in their respective countries. SEARCA is the implementing partner of ASRF.

Held on 14-16 April 2015, the writeshop is a Project Development Assistance (PDA) activity, one type of grant under the ASRF. The PDA also intended to identify issues and determine priority interventions that will help address them.

As recommended during the *3rd Program Steering Committee Meeting*, the PDA revisited two proposals endorsed by the Indonesia ASFN Focal Point under the Second Call to ascertain how they can contribute to the objectives of addressing pressing social forestry issues in the country.

Indonesia has set a target of allocating 12.7 million hectares to social forestry in its 2015-2019 Development Plan. The PDA generated three proposals that will help push this agenda and achieve the national target. The proposals, which will be subject to the ASRF review process, are as follows:

- Development of a Process to Acquire Mukim Forest Recognition: Preparatory Phase (Proponent: Rumoh Transparansi)
- Capacity Needs Assessment to Improve the Performance of Forestry Extension Workers in Lampung (Proponent: Forum HKM Propinsi)
- Strengthening Multistakeholders Engagement



Participants and facilitators of the PDA from government and nongovernmental organizations in Indonesia.

to Accelerate Social Forestry Development (Proponent: Directorate of Social Forestry Development, Ministry of Environment and Forestry)

The writeshop was attended by officials from the Directorate of Social Forestry Development of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and two nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), namely: Rumoh Transparansi and Forum HKM Propinsi. The PDA provided an opportunity for the ASRF project team to interact with the primary beneficiary of the ASRF—the ASFN Focal Point and the agency.

The PDA contextualized social forestry program in the country, which has its own dynamics, strengths, and challenges. The interaction with the government and NGOs present provided insights on their specific needs and strategic activities that can help address such needs. These insights are important in achieving the

objectives of ASRF.

Also present at the PDA were Mr. Eri Indrawan of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and Ms. Sagita Arhidani, Head of ASFN Secretariat. The PDA was facilitated by Mr. Arif Aliadi, with overall supervision by Ms. Amy M. Lecciones, ASRF Regional Coordinator. The PDA in Indonesia was the second such activity conducted by the ASRF; the first was held in Lao PDR in February 2015.

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. The ASRF is one of the new initiatives of the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry (ASFCC)—Phase II with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. (Report from AMLecciones)

## SEARCA apprises ASFN on ASRF pilot phase

SHAN STATE, Myanmar—SEARCA, represented by Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, Program Head for Research and Development, reported the accomplishments of the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) Strategic Response Fund (ASRF) in its first year (April 2014-May 2015) at the 9th Annual Meeting of ASFN.

The ASEAN Member States (AMS) present at the meeting held on 4-5 June 2015 expressed their appreciation for the financial support from ASRF, particularly for ongoing projects and Proposal Development Assistance (PDA) activities ([See related story above](#)).

A dinner reception hosted by SEARCA on 2 June 2015 was occasion to establish rapport among the ASFN Leaders and Focal Points who were

shown a preview of the ASRF activities in video.

The Program Steering Committee convened during the 9th Annual Meeting to discuss the ASRF plans and feedback on how the facility can be improved.

SEARCA also joined the 6th ASFN Conference, where it facilitated the breakout session on “ASEAN Vision 2020 for Food, Agriculture and Forestry (FAF) and Social Forestry,” the outputs of which were among the conference recommendations. SEARCA also distributed



Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (fourth from far end of table, right side), reports the accomplishments of the ASRF in its first year.

knowledge products at the knowledge fair during the conference.

With Dr. Burgos at the back-to-back events were Ms. Carmen Nyhria G. Rogel, Program Specialist for R&D, and Ms. Amy M. Lecciones, ASRF Regional Coordinator. (Report from AMLecciones)



## Back-to-back KM training for agri bureau staff conducted

Training courses on *Demystifying Knowledge Management (KM)* and *Knowledge Sharing for Your Work: Techniques and Tools for Project KM* were conducted back-to-back for 24 staffers of the Department of Agriculture–Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) as well as DA regional field offices, and other DA bureaus and attached agencies. With them throughout the week was Ms. Julia A. Lapitan, who heads DA-BAR's Applied Communication Division.

The training workshops, held on 13-17 April 2015, were implemented by SEARCA under the DA-BAR-funded project titled *Capacity Development Program on Knowledge Management–Phase II*.

Dr. Nicomedes P. Eleazar and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit Jr., DA-BAR and SEARCA Directors, respectively, graced the event and emphasized that such

training not only improves people's skills but also helps them become assets to their institutions. Both Directors affirmed their partnership in strengthening their KM Programs with focus in inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD).

The first two days were devoted to the course on demystifying KM, which focused on the foundational concepts and principles of KM in the agriculture and fisheries sector. Topics discussed were foundation and principles of KM; knowledge capture in the organizational, sectoral and personal levels; documents management; and knowledge sharing and KM for the agriculture sector.

*Knowledge Sharing for Your Work: Techniques and Tools for Project KM* was tackled in the

last three days. The highlight of the course was a workshop on knowledge sharing using social media. Four groups of participants were formed to enable them to demonstrate knowledge sharing to external audiences using social media networks, particularly through blogging via WordPress, vlogging (video blogging) via YouTube, CoPs (community of practice) via Facebook Workgroups, and Tweets (online post consisting of 140 character or less) via Twitter. The groups' outputs were posted online via Wordpress, YouTube, and Twitter.

Dr. Alexander Flor, Professor of Development Communication at the University of the Philippines Open University and KM Capacity Development Expert cum Team Leader, served as the lead resource person, with Ms. Emely Amoloza as KM Training Facilitator. (SGLQuinones)



The training participants with (seated, from left) Dr. Lope B. Santos III, Program Specialist and Officer in Charge of SEARCA's Project Development and Technical Services; Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, SEARCA Acting Program Head for Research and Development; Dr. Nicomedes P. Eleazar, DA-BAR Director; Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director; Ms. Julia A. Lapitan, OIC Head of DA-BAR's Applied Communication Division; and Dr. Alexander G. Flor, KM Capacity Development Expert cum Team Leader.

## LGUs in 2 Phl watersheds train on GHG inventory

SEARCA conducted a training course on greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory for local governments of municipalities in the Lower Marikina and Camarines Sur watershed areas as part of the project titled *TA-8493 PH: Climate Resilience and Green Growth in Critical Watersheds (46441-001)*, which is led by the Climate Change Commission (CCC) of the Philippines and funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR).

The project is being implemented by SEARCA with its partners, namely: CTI Engineering Japan, Ergons Project Management, and Woodfields Consultants, Inc.

Held on 9-11 June 2015 at the SEARCA Residence Hotel, the training aims to capacitate members of the Technical Working Groups (TWG) in charge of the agriculture, energy, forestry, industry, and waste sectors. Participants came from the local government units of Marikina City, Quezon City and Cainta in Rizal province, all located in the Lower Marikina River Basin; and Naga City, Milaor, and San Fernando, which are all located in the Camarines Sur watershed area.

Tools for GHG inventory developed by the Local Governments for Sustainability-Southeast Asia (ICLEI) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) were used during the workshops and hands-on exercises.

The training aimed to enable the participants to identify their roles and functions in the conduct of GHG inventory in their respective local government units, express their commitment to assume their identified roles and functions, demonstrate their competencies in conducting GHG inventory, and formulate an action plan to generate and maintain GHG inventory data.

The resource persons included five project consultants as well as Ms. Edna J. Juanillo of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), Forester Alexis D. Lapiz of CCC, Mr. Ranell Martin M. Dedicatoria of ICLEI, and Ms. Jean Laurente and Ms. Marina T. Mallare of USAID. (Report from MBAlmanza)

# Celebrating 50 Years of Education Cooperation in Regional Sustainable Development

## Thailand hosts 48th SEAMEO Council Conference

CHONBURI, Thailand—The Ministry of Education of Thailand hosted the largest gathering of education ministers in Southeast Asia at the *48th SEAMEO Council Conference*. With the Ministers of Education and higher education officials from 11 SEAMEO member countries at the meeting on 6-9 May 2015 were representatives from SEAMEO associate member countries, SEAMEO affiliate members, SEAMEO regional centers and international organizations.

H.E. Admiral Narong Pipatanasai, Minister of Education of Thailand was elected President of the SEAMEO Council (May 2015-April 2017) and presided over the opening ceremony. He succeeded H. E. Prof. Dr. Pham Vu Luan, Vietnam's Minister of Education and Training.

The China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE) was formally admitted as an affiliate member of SEAMEO.

### Golden anniversary

The SEAMEO 50th Anniversary celebration was launched during the conference. The milestone was commemorated with the SEAMEO Recognition Award which honors six individuals for their dedication and involvement in SEAMEO, particularly in education, science, and culture that contributed towards a better quality of life in Southeast Asia. The awardees are H.E. Pehin Orang Kaya Laila Wijaya Dato Seri Setia Dr Hj



The recipients of the SEAMEO Recognition Award are nationals of (from left) Vietnam, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

Awang Abdul Aziz bin Begawan Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Seri Paduka Hj Awang Umar of Brunei Darussalam, Prof. Dr. Bambang Sudibyo of Indonesia, Dató Dr. Ahamad bin Sipon of Malaysia, Prof. Dr. Erlinda C. Pefianco of the Philippines, Prof. Dr. Abdul Wichiencharoen of Thailand, and Mr. Tran Ba Viet Dzung of Vietnam.

Aside from the anniversary exhibition at the conference, the SEAMEO Secretariat (SEAMES) also launched the SEAMEO 50th Anniversary commemorative book, which chronicles SEAMEO's milestones over half a century and outlines the enormous contribution that SEAMEO and its collaborators have made toward Education for Sustainable Development.

### Policy forum and roundtable meeting

A policy forum on the theme "Digital Learning for Creating Future Global Citizens" was organized by Thailand to coincide with the conference. It

focused on the benefits of digital learning and the importance of laying down the infrastructure and foundation for digital learning. Issues that surfaced include the need to further study motivation to learn and the assessment of learning through online courses.

SEAMES also facilitated the Ministerial Round Table Meeting, which focused on how SEAMEO can be of best value to address the implication of the seven priority areas of the SEAMEO Post-2015 Education Agenda: Early childhood care and education, Inclusive education and access to education, Resilience in education, Technical and vocational education and training (TVET), Teacher education, Higher education and research, and 21st century curriculum.

Indonesia will host the 49th SEAMEO Council Conference in 2017. (LLDDomingo with report from SEAMES)

## SEAMEO center directors meet anew

BANGKOK, Thailand—The *SEAMEO Regional Center Directors Meeting (CDM)* this year focused on actions taken on resolutions of the *48th SEAMEO Council Conference*, including the SEAMEO Online Capacity Building for Southeast Asian Member Countries and the regional activities celebrating the SEAMEO 50th Anniversary.

The progress of major initiatives under the SEAMEO Strategic Plan 2011-2020 were also reported during the meeting, which was held on 8-9 June 2015. Also discussed were new initiatives, proposal, plan, and activities through the support of SEAMEO partners, collaborators, and among SEAMEO centers. A special meeting held on 8 June discussed the Inter-

Center Collaboration Programme and a communication strategy among SEAMEO centers/network. The day after the CDM, a *Mid-Term Review Meeting* was held to analyze lessons learned from the implementation of the SEAMEO Strategic Plan (2011-2020) and assess the challenges.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, participated in the meeting along with 82 other officials and key staff from 20 other SEAMEO centers, SEAMES, three SEAMEO affiliate members, and nine partners. With Dr. Saguiguit were Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, Unit Head for Management Services and Executive Coordinator, Office of the Director; Ms. Maria Teresa B. Ferino, Administrative Associate; and Mr. Elmer G. Pandanan, Communications Assistant, both also of the Office of the Director. (LLDDomingo with report from SEAMES)



## New SEAMES Director appointed

BANGKOK, Thailand—Dr. Ir. Gatot Hari Priowirjanto, an Indonesian, has been appointed as Director of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat (SEAMES) for a four-year term effective 1 April 2015.

SEAMEO is a chartered international organization founded in 1965 to promote cooperation in education, science, and culture in the Southeast Asian region.

As SEAMES Director, Dr. Gatot also serves as an ex-officio member of SEARCA's Governing Board.

He said "it is humbling yet an honor" for him to start his tenure as SEAMES Director in the year SEAMEO marks the 50th anniversary of its establishment.

Prior to his appointment as SEAMES Director, Dr. Gatot served as Director of the Indonesia-based SEAMEO Regional Open Learning Centre (SEAMOLEC) from 2008 to March 2015.



Dr. Ir. Gatot Hari Priowirjanto

Before joining SEAMOLEC, Dr. Gatot served as Head of the Bureau of Planning and International Cooperation and Director of Vocational Education School, both under the Ministry of National Education, Indonesia; Secretary General of Board of National Vocational Education, Indonesia; Attaché of Education and Culture at the Indonesian Embassy in Bonn, Germany. Since 1978 to date, Dr. Gatot serves as instructor staff and researcher of the Faculty of Mining, Institute of Technology Bandung, Indonesia.

Moreover, since 2011 Dr. Gatot has been serving as Head of Expert Team of Community College for the Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia and Head of Team Debt Swap Programme between Indonesia and Italy. He has also been Coordinator of the Indonesia-German Scholarship Programme since 2010.

Dr. Gatot succeeded Dr. Witaya Jeradechakul, who served as SEAMES Director from April 2011 until March 2015. (LLDDomingo)

## MSU Head garners SEAMEO Service Award

Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, SEARCA Unit Head for Management Services and Executive Coordinator at the Office of the Director, was among the recipients of the 2014/2015 SEAMEO Service Award.



Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, proudly holds the 2014/2015 SEAMEO Service Award plaque given to her.

Given biennially during the SEAMEO Council (SEAMEC) Conference, the award recognizes exemplary staff members of SEAMEO centers and units who have demonstrated a high level of achievement in their work performance, innovation and creativity, professionalism, and commitment that contribute to the success of the organization. Each SEAMEO center selects the recipient of the SEAMEO Service Award based on a standard set of criteria.

Ms. Robles joined SEARCA in 2004 as Project Management Associate at the Center's Consulting Services (now known as Project Development and Technical Services). With her dedication and hard work, she rose through the ranks and became Executive Coordinator at the Office of the Director and has been concurrently appointed as Unit Head for Management Services since 2014.

The award was presented to Ms. Robles during the 48th SEAMEC Conference held on 6-10 May 2015 in Jomtien-Pattaya, Chonburi, Thailand. She is the 10th SEARCA staff to receive the award.

Ms. Robles attended the Conference as part of the SEARCA delegation led by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director. With them were Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr., Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and Country Representative of the Philippines to the SEARCA Governing Board; Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas, SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration; and Mr. Rheden V. Rebong, Payroll Assistant at SEARCA's Accounting Unit. (EGPandanan)

## SEAMEO confab tackles quality assurance management

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Brunei Darussalam—Thirty-three Directors, Deputy Directors, and other key officers and staff of SEAMEO centers and units attended the *Knowledge Sharing Conference on Embracing International Standards Practice in Quality Assurance and Management* hosted by SEAMEO Regional Center for Vocational and Technical Education and Training (VOCTECH).

SEARCA was represented by Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas, Deputy Director for Administration; Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, Unit Head for Management Services and Executive Coordinator, Office of the Director; and Mr. Christian F. Agnes, Financial Specialist, Accounting Unit.

Held on 12-14 May 2015, the conference enabled the participants to appreciate significant and contemporary frameworks and approaches of quality assurance management and international

standards certification through theoretical discussions, sharing sessions, and small group discussions.

The meeting aimed to expand understanding of the operational principles and concepts of total quality assurance management and international standard certification among SEAMEO center officials and key staff. It was also a venue for sharing of gainful experiences and challenges in International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certifications and implementation by SEAMEO VOCTECH, Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (INNTECH), and Regional Centre for Tropical Biology (BIOTROP).

The participants, including Dr. Ir. Gatot Hari Priowirjanto, SEAMEO Secretariat Director, also had a dialogue with an external authority in ISO, which was intended to generate and acquire ideas as well as best practices. (LLDDomingo)



Mr. Hj Md Sharifuddin bin Hj Md Salleh (at rostrum), VOCTECH Director, welcomes the conference participants.

# How can ASEAN become a leader in food security?

The ASEAN region faces an opportunity to become a champion in food security by addressing the challenge of feeding its 5.1 billion population by 2050, noted policy experts.

As one of the world's food baskets, ASEAN is prone to the multifaceted challenges of food security, especially as the region needs to leapfrog its food production by 2050, noted Dr. Paul S. Teng, Principal Officer at Singapore's National Institute of Education and SEARCA Senior Fellow.

"ASEAN must approach food security as a region with better coordination and with a common position to become a price setter in the market, rather than just a price taker," said Dr. Teng, who served as Technical Coordinator of the *Executive Forum on Food Security: Leaders in ASEAN Agriculture and Development* held at SEARCA on 1-5 June 2015.

Thirty-five senior officials and middle managers from government agencies, private sector, research institutions, and the academe from eight ASEAN Member States (AMS), together with 15 international resource persons from public and private sectors and the academe, took part in the executive forum.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said in his welcome remarks that "pathways toward food security have never been easy as we are constantly faced by challenges of an ever increasing population, dwindling natural resource base, and worsening climatic conditions that all negatively affect the region's agriculture sector. These varied and persistent problems in the region, coupled with the changing ASEAN agricultural landscape, demands leaders and executives ... to rise above the occasion and make appropriate multilateral decisions and actions."

The executive forum is one of SEARCA's activities along its research and capacity building mandate to contribute to food and nutrition security in Southeast Asia.

As a big importer of food, mostly from the US and Brazil, the AMS are reduced to taking prices from exporters. Together, the AMS can negotiate better price deals with the goal of sharing equitable profit to farmers and producers, and in all parts of the supply chain up to distribution, Dr. Teng explained.

He added that countries in the region must go beyond economic integration and harmonize efforts on three major fronts: ensuring food availability, shying away from subsistence



Dr. Paul S. Teng, points out that the first challenge that ASEAN must address is food availability.



Dr. Regina Moench-Pfanner, Director, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, talks about promoting nutrition security and dietary diversity as a way to deal with hidden hunger.



Dr. Larry Chee-Yong Wong, visiting fellow at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies in Malaysia, shares his view from the agribusiness perspective.

farming, and implementing a nurturing policy environment for food supply.

Malaysia outscored its neighbors in the region after ranking 34th among 109 countries in the 2015 Global Food Security Index issued in May 2015.

## Food access

"Food availability has always been an issue in food security so this is the first challenge that ASEAN must address," Dr. Teng asserted.

"We need to ask what needs to be improved in food production, processing, trade, distribution, and quality standards," he noted.

Dr. Teng cited making rice truly available in the region remains an issue, for example. Statistics from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) show that the region is

home to both major rice producers and exporters such as China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam as well as major rice importers such as the Philippines.

He added that ASEAN can ensure staple food commodities are available to AMS while continuing exports to other regions, and at the same time deciding as a bloc to find the best competitive advantage in terms of growing profitable crops.

Ending hunger should also be tied to providing the population with access to quality nutrition and not just caloric intake, Dr. Regina Moench-Pfanner, Director, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), pointed out.

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