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A WIDER NET

To invest resources in improving agricultural higher education institutions is to cast a wider net for better evidence-based solutions to the problems and challenges in agriculture and rural development.

Photo by Chairunnas

Cambodian university, SEARCA co-organize LEAP SEA 6

BATTAMBANG, Cambodia—The University of Battambang (UBB) and SEARCA jointly organized the sixth offering of the *Executive Forum on Leadership Excellence in Academe Program for Southeast Asia (LEAP SEA)*.

Held on 26-30 January 2015, this year's LEAP SEA offering had 19 participants from six countries, namely: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. They included a university president, a vice president, a vice rector, a vice chancellor, two campus administrators, a vice dean; and 12 heads of programs, departments, and institutes in their respective universities.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said in his welcome remarks read by his representative Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz, SEARCA Program Head for Knowledge Management, that the environment in which higher education institutions operate is dynamic and changes through the years, demanding more effective management strategies from academic administrators. As executives and leaders, LEAP SEA participants are in better position to spur development and influence change in their respective institutions.

“Through this executive forum, SEARCA hopes to develop a strong cadre of

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Participants, resource persons, and organizers of LEAP SEA 6.

highly competent academic leaders who will promote agricultural education in Southeast Asia,” he said.

For UBB’s part, Ms. Sieng Emtotim, Rector, said Cambodia’s Minister of Education, Youth and Sports has directed the university to prioritize the agricultural sector in its programs. Thus, UBB will make its Faculty of Agriculture and Food Processing its flagship faculty.

LEAP SEA aims to provide these academic executives with new knowledge about leadership and management of higher education, especially those in agriculture, through their interaction with experts and eminent academic leaders.

The executive forum was also an opportunity for the participants to reflect on their common contemporary challenges and suggest appropriate solutions in higher education leadership/management in Southeast Asia. It was also a chance to write LEAP SEA cases as knowledge and learning resources appropriate for Southeast Asia.

Aside from having added to an ever growing cadre and network of highly competent academic leaders in Southeast Asia, at the end of the forum, participants produced the first draft of case stories highlighting reflections and replicable practices on academic leadership in tertiary and postgraduate academic institutions in agriculture, forestry, and environmental studies in the context



Participants buckle down to work during the first workshop of the forum.

of Southeast Asian realities and challenges.

Resource persons for this offering of LEAP SEA included Dr. Touch Visalsok, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Cambodia; Prof. Dr. M. Aman Wirakartakusumah, Rector, Universitas Siswa Bangsa Internasional, Indonesia; Dr. Cely S. Binoya, Professor and Dean, Graduate School, Central Bicol State University of Agriculture, Philippines and President of the Asia Pacific Association of Educators in Agriculture and Environment (APEAEN); Dr. Ruperto S. Sangalang, Commissioner, Commission on Higher Education (CHED) of the Philippines; Prof. Zita Mohd Fahmi, Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Quality Assurance), Malaysian Qualifications Agency; and Dr. Philip Charlesworth of the United Cambodia Agri. Dr. Binoya has served as the Technical Coordinator of the last three offerings of the LEAP SEA Executive Forums.



Dr. Maria Celeste H. Cadiz (right), Program Head for Knowledge Management, presents SEARCA’s institutional symbol called “Growth Monument” to Dr. Sieng Emtotim, UBB Rector.

academic administration—only need updated information on the management of higher education in agriculture. Moreover, academic administrators change periodically as younger faculty members gain experience and academic credentials, and are appointed to executive posts.

Since then, LEAP SEA is offered to leaders, particularly those in their first year or first term of administration, of tertiary and postgraduate academic institutions in agriculture, forestry or environmental studies in Southeast Asian countries. (NARamos)

THE SEARCA DIARY

Web: www.searca.org
E-mail: post@searca.org
Mail: SEARCA, College, Los Baños, Laguna 4031 Philippines
Tel: +63 49 536 2365 to 67 loc. 419
Fax: +63 49 536 7097

Production Team

Editor: Leah Lyn D. Domingo
Editorial Advisers: Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr.
Adoracion T. Robles
Graphic Designer: Edwin Robert A. Cortes

SEAMEO Council President commends SEARCA

His Excellency Prof. Dr. Pham Vu Luan, Minister of Education and Training of Vietnam and President of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Council, lauded SEARCA for its contributions to SEAMEO and to research and training in agriculture and forestry in the region.

During his visit to the Center on 26 January 2015, Minister Luan noted the success of SEARCA in its research studies on agriculture and forestry as well as “in training, and having many scholars who are well-known internationally and regionally.”

Minister Luan was escorted by representatives of the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd); Dr. Tinsiri Siribodhi, Deputy Director (Administration and Communication), SEAMEO Secretariat; Mr. Tran Ba Viet Dzong, Advisor to the Minister on SEAMEO and ASEAN Affairs, Ministry of Education and Training (MOET); Mrs. Phung Thi Hong Van, Senior Officer at MOET’s International Co-operation Department; Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Nam, Editor in Chief of the Education and Times Journal; and Mr. Nguyen Dang Khue, Lecturer at Hanoi University of Foreign Studies.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, led the Center in welcoming the SEAMEO Council President and his entourage. Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr., Chancellor, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and Philippine representative to the SEARCA Governing Board, also welcomed them to the university campus where SEARCA is hosted by the Philippine government.

Also at SEARCA to meet with the SEAMEO Council President were Engr. Romeo R. Quizon, Director

of the Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Public Health, Hospital Administration, Environmental and Occupational Health (SEAMEO TROPMED-Philippines) based in the University of the Philippines (UP) Manila where he is also Dean of the College of Public Health (CPH), and Dr. Maria Carmen C. Tolabing, Assistant to the Dean for Academic Affairs of UP-CPH.



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (left), SEARCA Director, presents a replica of the Growth Monument, SEARCA’s institutional symbol, to H. E. Prof. Dr. Pham Vu Luan.

In a joint meeting attended by the guests as well as SEARCA staff and scholars, Minister Luan was given a briefing about SEARCA, its accomplishments in FY 2013/2014, and its Tenth Five-Year Plan (FY 2014/2015-2018/2019), as well as the programs and activities of SEAMEO TROPMED-Philippines.

In response, the SEAMEO Council President thanked the two Centers for their warm welcome and for their “very informative presentations” on the programs and activities they implement in the past fiscal year.

“I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks on behalf of the government of Vietnam, the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam for your support and assistance in building capacity, and training many Vietnamese scholars in agriculture and forestry sector of Vietnam in the past years,” Minister Luan said.

“As President of the SEAMEO Council, I’d like to express my thanks and recognition of your contribution in supporting other SEAMEO centers

in the region as well as contributing to SEAMEO operations in general,” he added.

Minister Luan also expressed his appreciation for the efforts of SEAMEO TROPMED-Philippines in providing the public health training program for many experts in the region, which contributes to the improvement of public health in the region.

He disclosed that he and Philippine Education Secretary Armin A. Luistro had a meeting earlier that day wherein they agreed that the Philippines and Vietnam will prioritize a number of areas for bilateral cooperation. He said they believe such an initiative will set “a bright example to other countries.” He expressed his hope that public health will be among said priority areas. On the other hand, he affirmed that agriculture and the core activities of SEARCA are priority areas.

The SEAMEO Council President’s visits to the SEAMEO centers in the Philippines and other countries in the region are expected to reinforce the strong ties among the members of the SEAMEO family. (LLDDomingo)

Cambodian education minister lauds SEARCA scholarship program

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia—SEARCA drew compliments from H. E. Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Cambodia’s Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, for its efforts to build the capacities of the country’s manpower in agriculture through graduate scholarship.

Minister Naron commended SEARCA in a meeting with Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development, during her courtesy visit on 10 February 2014. The meeting took



Cambodia education minister Dr. Hang Chuon Naron (left) presents a token of appreciation to Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development.

place after SEARCA’s interview of scholarship applicants from Cambodia.

Minister Naron said that with the country’s efforts to improve its agriculture sector, particularly its

rice production, SEARCA’s graduate scholarship will be very instrumental. He further affirmed that he looks forward to a sustained partnership between the government and the Center.

Aside from providing scholarship grants, SEARCA is also assisting Cambodia in its human resource development through its institutional development assistance to the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), Cambodia’s leading agricultural university.

Since the establishment of SEARCA’s graduate scholarship program in 1968, SEARCA has awarded scholarship grants to more than 60 Cambodians to pursue graduate study programs in agriculture, forestry, and related sciences. (JSLaranas)

CDAT, SEARCA sign MOU for institutional cooperation

The Council of the Deans of Agricultural Science, Thailand (CDAT) and SEARCA have agreed to collaborate on a number of activities, including staff exchange for research, lecture, and academic extension, exchange of publications, joint staff development program, and collaborative research.

This agreement was formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Institutional Cooperation signed on 13 March 2015. The signatories are Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, and Associate Prof. Theera Visitpanich, CDAT Chairman.

The signing ceremony was held at SEARCA during the visit of the CDAT delegation composed of 23 deans and faculty members from 11 members, namely: Chiang Mai University, Kasetsart University–Bangkhen Campus and Kamphaeng Saen Campus, Naresuan University, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Ubon Ratchathani University, Maejo University, Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan, and Rajamangala University of Technology Isan–Surin Campus and Sakon Nakhon Campus.

Altogether, the Council is constituted by deans from 30 faculties and schools of agricultural universities and colleges in Thailand. It was organized to set the general direction for agricultural higher education in Thailand and lead appropriate activities toward agricultural productivity in the country.



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (seated, second from right), SEARCA Director, and Dr. Theera Visitpanich (seated, second from left), CDAT Chairman, sign the MOU for institutional cooperation. Behind them are some of the deans and faculty members from CDAT member universities and SEARCA officials who witnessed the ceremonial signing.

The other members of CDAT are Rajamangala University of Technology–Lanna, Thanyaburi, and Srivijaya Campuses; University of Phayao; Khon Kaen University; Maharakham University; Nakhon Phanom University; Kasetsart University–Sakon Nakhon Campus; Suranaree University of Technology; King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang; Silpakorn University; Prince Songkla University; Walailak University; Thaksin University; and Princess of Naradhiwas University.

The MOU will be in force until March 2020 and is subject to extension upon mutual consent of both organizations. (EGPandanan)



The CDAT delegation of 23 deans and faculty members who visited SEARCA with Dr. Saguiguit (twelfth from right) and other Center officials.

PCIC board gets SEARCA-PhilRice report on agri insurance project

QUEZON CITY, Philippines—Results of the SEARCA-PhilRice project titled *Improving the Agricultural Insurance Program to Enhance Resilience to Climate Change: Evidence from Rice and Corn Production in the Philippines* were presented by the project team to the Board of Directors (BOD) of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC).

The project aimed to analyze how good agricultural practices (GAP) adoption among rice and corn farmers could be implemented to complement the agricultural insurance system in the Philippines.

Specifically, the project identified existing and matured GAP technologies related to pest and disease resilience in rice and corn production. It also determined the extent of awareness of farmers about these technologies; analyzed uptake patterns; and identified the psychological, socioeconomic and demographic determinants of GAP adoption. Furthermore, it assessed the perception and level of awareness on crop insurance system mechanisms among rice and corn farmers and identified appropriate policy recommendations and intervention measures to improve adoption of GAP and the formulation and effectiveness of the agricultural insurance program.

In a meeting with the PCIC BOD on 25 February 2015, Dr. Jose M. Yorobe of the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Economics and Management (UPLB-CEM) and project leader,

together with Dr. Bessie M. Burgos and Ms. Pilipinas M. Luis of SEARCA, reported on the corn component. Ms. Imelda A. Arida of the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) reported on the rice component.

Results of the project could be used by PCIC to improve the traditional agricultural and weather-based insurance systems for a better program package that will entice farmers to avail of the insurance. These could also guide other Southeast Asian countries, as PCIC is the pioneer government agency in the agriculture insurance program in the region.

Publishing reports is a necessary step in the dialogue with other scientists and policymakers about the approach and significance of research studies. PCIC will thus partner with SEARCA and PhilRice in the publication and dissemination of the project results. (PMLuis)

IFAD explores collaboration with SEARCA

Mr. Benoit Thierry, Country Programme Manager, and Mr. Yolando Arban, Country Programme Officer, both of the Asia and the Pacific Division of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), visited SEARCA to explore potential areas of renewed collaboration with the Center.

During their meeting on 27 January 2015, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, briefed Mr. Thierry on the Center's activities and programs under its Tenth Five-Year Plan focused on inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD). Mr. Thierry was also apprised of SEARCA's past collaborations with IFAD in various research projects and learning events.

For his part, Mr. Thierry explained that IFAD is looking into capacity building programs for the young generation who will work for the agriculture sector. He noted the declining interest of young

people in pursuing agriculture-related degree programs which results in decreasing human resources working in agriculture. An internship program for SEARCA scholars on IFAD's projects may be explored as a means of capacitating more young people in this sector.

Mr. Thierry also stressed the importance of training of agricultural technicians as well as disseminating the results of research through scientific and popularized publications and knowledge products suitable for its target clientele.

Since 2004, SEARCA's focus on various aspects and dimensions of agricultural and rural development found convergence with IFAD's development priorities in the Southeast Asian region. This resulted in many joint undertakings and collaborative research projects, such as the *Effects of Biofuel on Agricultural Development, Food Security, Poverty, and the Environment*



Mr. Benoit Thierry (left), Country Programme Manager, IFAD Asia and the Pacific Division with Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (right), SEARCA Director, and Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas, SEARCA Deputy Director for Administration.

in the Philippines; Policy Responses to Food Price Crisis and Their Implications: The Case of Greater Mekong Sub-region Countries; Northern Mindanao Community Initiatives and Resource Management Project (NMCIREMP) Immediate Impact Assessment Study; and the development of a "Country Strategic Opportunities Paper (COSOP) for the Philippines." (EGPandanan)

Value chain analysis of Phi carabao products kicks off

In recent years, carabao production has gained importance as a vital component in achieving food security and increasing farm income in the Philippines. It is now a main source of both draft power and meat for smallholder farmers.

The Philippine Carabao Center has thus tapped SEARCA to conduct a *Value Chain Analysis of Carabao and Carabao-based Products in Luzon, Philippines* to examine the processes that materials for said products undergo during production and the resulting variety of products at the end of the chain. The project will then develop product- and commodity-specific value chain maps, which identify the activities and services, key players and their functions, product and information flows as well as selling and payment schemes.

Carabao production and value adding

Carabao production can be integrated into conventional farming systems, but the potential for draft and milk and meat production has not been fully utilized. Hence, the project will also analyze the market and market opportunities of carabao products, including market standards and requirements.

Poor reproductive capacity of the animal, low productivity, high mortality rate, and poor



Dr. Flordeliza A. Lantican (bottom right) presents the project inception report to PCC officers, namely: Dr. Liza Battad (second on the left side of the table) and Mr. Eric Palacpac on her right, and SEARCA officers and staff.

marketing are causing the decline of carabao production in the Philippines. The project will thus come up with an overview of the entire industry in the Philippines, including local production levels, production systems, and trends.

In line with SEARCA's thrust of promoting inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) initiatives, the project will identify the constraints and opportunities faced by the value chain players by function and segment, and find ways toward achieving inclusiveness in the value-adding activities along the chain. This is also expected to aid in the provision of specific policy directions and strategies to improve the carabao industry in general and the specific value chains in particular.

SEARCA will examine existing carabao supply and value-added chains in the following regions of the country: Ilocos (R-I), Cagayan Valley (R-II), Central Luzon (R-III), and CALABARZON (R-IVA).

Started in January 2015, the year-long project is led by Dr. Flordeliza A. Lantican, a distinguished agricultural economist who specializes in agricultural marketing and price analysis and former dean of the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Economics and Management.

Project in full swing

Two months into the project, Dr. Lantican and her team have made headway in the research.

The inception report was presented to PCC on 3 March 2015. Aside from Dr. Liza Battad and Mr. Eric Palacpac who represented PCC, SEARCA program and unit heads and staff were also present at the meeting. After recognizing the wide coverage of the project, which includes two separate VCAs for carabao milk and milk products and meat (carabeef), it was decided that Phase 1

Value chain/ to page 15

Scoping mission for piloting effective models of ISARD wraps up

After a series of meetings with local government units (LGUs) and state universities and colleges (SUCs) in five provinces in the Philippines, SEARCA concluded the scoping mission for the *Piloting and Upscaling Effective Models of Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD)* project.

The mission is part of the project's Phase 1 activities that involve scoping for a potential project site and social marketing of the ISARD model. It covered the provinces of Aklan, Camarines Norte, Davao Oriental, Leyte, and Occidental Mindoro.

Spearheaded by SEARCA's Research and Development Department (RDD), the pilot project aims to harvest SEARCA's 40-year experience on ARD and bring this to bear upon the lives of the rural poor and vulnerable sectors in the region. Moreover, it aims to enhance the capacities of target beneficiaries and communities, as well as partner institutions, in implementing effective agricultural systems models that demonstrate increased socioeconomic benefits for the poor and vulnerable groups through integrated ground-level interventions.

Guided by the defining elements of ISARD under SEARCA's Tenth Five-Year Plan—that is, social inclusion and environmental sustainability, the project design is anchored on participatory approach to project planning and management, ecosystems and landscape approach, and systems-oriented inter- and trans-disciplinary approach to research and capacity building.

The scoping mission was carried out to identify potential agro-ecosystems-based project sites and local partners (e.g., SUCs, LGUs) in the Philippines based on a set of SEARCA-developed general criteria for an ISARD-compliant agricultural systems model, and another set of criteria for selecting the implementing institutions.

Potential sites in the southern parts

The first leg of the scoping mission covered provinces in the Visayas and Mindanao. It started in Davao Oriental in Mindanao where the SEARCA team met with the president and heads of extension and research of Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology (DOSCST) to explore the possibility of collaborating with DOSCST as partner-implementer in the project. In a similar meeting with officials of the municipal government of Boston, Davao del Norte, the feasibility and appropriateness of the area as a pilot site was also discussed.

The next stop was Leyte in the eastern Visayas where the SEARCA team met with the Visayas State University (VSU) president and research and extension staff. Exploratory meetings were also held in the municipalities of Inopacan, Matalom, and Jaro. Communal farms, upland farming experimental sites, and trading centers in the area were also visited.

In Aklan, which is in Central Visayas, Aklan State University (ASU) officials and LGU technicians assisted the SEARCA team on visits to coastal resource management and eco-tourism sites in New Washington, as well as to rice-based farmers' cooperatives in the upland farms of the town of Malinao.

Prospects in the north

For the second leg, the SEARCA team started with a visit to Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC) in the municipality of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. The potential project was next discussed with local officials of the municipality of Sablayan. Site validation was conducted in the OMSC-assisted upland agriculture project for indigenous communities in the province.



Dr. Rolando T. Bello (bottom right), SEARCA Adjunct Fellow and Overall Project Coordinator, hold exploratory talks with CNSC Research and Extension officers and a farmer-leader in Basud, Camarines Norte.



Mr. Henry M. Custodio (standing), SEARCA Program Specialist for R&D, discusses the elements of SEARCA's ISARD model and the Center's thrusts with government officials of Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro.

The last stop of the scoping mission was Camarines Norte where the SEARCA team visited farmer-leaders and cooperatives in the municipalities of Labo, Vinzons, and Basud with the assistance of Camarines Norte State College (CNSC). To conclude the scoping mission, the team will visit selected municipalities in the province of Laguna, which were identified as highly vulnerable areas to climate impacts that affect their production and marketing activities.

The SEARCA scoping mission team was composed of Dr. Bessie M. Burgos and Mr. Henry M. Custodio, Acting Program Head and Program Specialist, respectively, of SEARCA RDD, and Professor Rolando T. Bello of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), who also serves as the overall coordinator of the Piloting Project. (HMCustodio)

New Myanmar Representative to SEARCA GB appointed

Dr. Ye Tint Tun, Acting Director General of the Department of Agricultural Research, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, has been appointed to a three-year term as the Country Representative of Myanmar to the SEARCA Governing Board (GB) effective 2 February 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. Ye Tint Tun succeeded Mr. Hla Kyaw who served as Acting Director General of the Department of Agricultural Planning, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. (LLDDomingo)

9 Southeast Asians awarded SEARCA scholarship

Nine graduate students from Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam were awarded SEARCA scholarships effective the second semester of academic year 2014/2015. All the new scholars are pursuing their graduate programs at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

The new Myanmar and Lao scholars are supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada under the second cohort of its Upland Agriculture Fellowships Project. The new Filipino scholar is supported under the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC)-SEARCA scholarship project, while the scholars from Timor-Leste and Vietnam are supported by the regular SEARCA scholarship program.

The new scholars, and their nationality and degree program are as follows:

Regular SEARCA Scholars

- Mr. Agustinho Moniz, Timorese (PhD, agronomy)
- Ms. Do Thi Thanh Huyen, Vietnamese (PhD, agricultural economics)

SEARCA-IDRC Scholars

- Mr. Khamasith Sengsouvanh, Laotian (Master of Agriculture, agronomy)
- Mr. Saengdavanh Inthavong, Laotian (MS, environmental science)
- Mr. Gyaw Shine Oo, Myanmar (MS, agronomy)

- Ms. Khin Hnin Yu, Myanmar (MS, agronomy)
- Mr. Naing Moe, Myanmar (Master of Agriculture, agronomy)
- Ms. Cho Cho Myint, Myanmar (Master of Agriculture, horticulture)

PCC-SEARCA Scholar

- Ms. Jennifer F. Maramba, Filipino (MS, animal science)

SEARCA's graduate scholarship program is administered and managed by its Graduate Education and Institutional Development Department (GEIDD). On 18 February 2015, GEIDD briefed the new scholars on SEARCA's policies and guidelines related to their study program and scholarship. (Report from JSLaranas)

ASRF to support forestry projects in 3 countries

Three forestry projects in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Vietnam will be funded under the ASEAN Social Forestry Network Strategic Response Fund (ASRF), which is implemented by SEARCA.

The ASRF is an initiative of the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) Phase II in support of the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN). It is currently funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) with some counterpart resources from SEARCA.

The ASRF aims to enable the ASEAN Member States (AMS) Focal Points to quickly respond to emerging issues and challenges, and articulate policy recommendations and directions on social forestry as it relates to climate change, food security, and poverty alleviation.

The titles of the winning proposals submitted for the ASRF Second Call, and their proponent and implementing institutions are as follows:

- "Linking Forest, Water and Energy: Assessing Socio-economic and Environment Impacts of Forest Management and Micro-hydro Development at Buffer Zone of a Conservation Area in West Java;" proposed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia and

to be implemented by Nature Conservation Society

- "Finding Lessons Learnt and Finalizing the Technical Guidelines on the Forest-based Income Generation Models;" proposed and to be implemented by Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development-Forest Inventory and Planning Institute (FIPI)
- "Resource Trends Assessment and Feasibility Study for Improving Food Security and Livelihoods Resilience Through Sustainable Harvesting, Rehabilitation and Marketing in Siem Reap;" proposed by Cambodia's Ministry of Forestry and to be implemented by Banteay Srei

Proposals submitted for the ASRF Second Call were from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The proposed initiatives aim to contribute to strengthening community forestry in the region through assessment of socioeconomic and environmental impacts of community forestry projects; improvement of management, policy implementation, and networks of community forestry; and resource trends assessment and feasibility studies of sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products.



Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (leftmost) of SEARCA raises a point during the ASRF Program Steering Committee (PSC) meeting.

The technical review and initial evaluation were conducted by the ASRF Program Management Office lodged under SEARCA's Research and Development Department and SEARCA's Internal Review Committee.

The shortlisted proposals were evaluated by the ASRF Program Steering Committee (PSC) on 22 January 2015. Also present were Dr. Doris Capistrano, ASFCC Regional Advisor; Ms. Sagita Arhidani, ASFN Secretariat Head; and the AMS representatives of the environment and forestry sector of Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, and Myanmar.

As Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, welcomed them, he affirmed SEARCA's commitment to promote sustainable forest resource management in the uplands against the backdrop of climate change and the need to ensure that the survival and livelihood needs of the growing population are met. He further affirmed that the insights and expert advice of the PSC members will greatly contribute to the objective of the ASRF to support projects that strategically impact on policies and social forestry. (Report from MAABatas)



Dr. Doris Capistrano (center), ASFCC Regional Advisor, and SEARCA R&D Department staff with ASRF PSC members who attended the meeting at SEARCA on 22 January 2015.

2nd IDRC-SEARCA annual conference held



CHIANG MAI, Thailand—The Southeast Asian Upland Agriculture Fellowship, a collaborative project of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada and SEARCA, held the *2nd IDRC-SEARCA Annual Fellowship Plus Conference* at the Empress Hotel here.

Hosted by the Faculty of Agriculture of Chiang Mai University (CMU), the conference was held back-to-back with the *1st International Conference on Asian Highland Natural Resources Management (AsiaHiLand)* on 7-9 January 2015.

Thirty-six IDRC-SEARCA scholars from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam were among the 150 conference participants. Ten of the scholars presented papers, while seven were poster presenters. Mr. Val Sophal, an IDRC-SEARCA scholar, bagged 3rd prize for poster presentations.

With more than 80 experts and researchers from 16 countries who gave presentations on topics that emphasized mountain development in Asia, the conference highlighted how scientific knowledge and innovations in the field of agricultural science contribute to upland development.

Prince Peesadej Ratchanee of Thailand opened the program and delivered a keynote address on the contribution of the Thai Royal Project Foundation in the development of highlands in Thailand. The Thai Royal Project Foundation received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for International Understanding in 1988 and the Colombo Plan Award for distinguished service in efforts to combat the drug problem in the Asia-Pacific region in 2003.

Dr. Annie Wesley, IDRC Senior Program Specialist on Agriculture and Food Security, also delivered a keynote address on the “Role of Research and Impact Pathways for Improved Nutrition and Food

Security in the Uplands.” Her speech stressed the “need to understand the linkages, influencing factors, and gender dynamics between food security and nutrition.” Dr. Wesley also affirmed that “improved partnerships and collaboration between researchers, farmers, and decision-makers can accelerate food and nutritional security in the uplands and mountainous regions.”

On the third day, the participants went on a field visit to the Nong Hoi Royal Project Development Center under the Thai Royal Project Foundation. The Center serves as a research support center that conducts experiments on new and potential development of temperate fruits and vegetable cultivation.

On 10 January 2015, a special session was convened wherein nine IDRC-SEARCA scholars presented their thesis proposals to members of the project Advisory Committee, namely: Dr. Vo Tong Xuan of Vietnam, Dr. Mom Seng of Cambodia, and Dr. Prasit Wangpakattapanawong of Thailand. Dr. Percy E. Sajise, former SEARCA Director and now SEARCA Senior Fellow, served as resource person for the special session. As a parting message, Dr. Wesley encouraged the scholars to serve as catalysts of change in their home countries.

The *2nd IDRC-SEARCA Annual Fellowship Plus Conference* was co-sponsored by SEARCA, IDRC, CMU, University of Hohenheim, and The Royal Project Foundation of Thailand. (ECAсило)

IDRC-SEARCA scholar wins 3rd best poster

Mr. Var Sophal, a Cambodian, bagged the 3rd Best Poster award at the *1st International Conference on Asian Highland Natural Resources Management (AsiaHiLand)* and *2nd IDRC-SEARCA Upland Agriculture Fellowship Plus Conference*.

Mr. Sophal is Assistant Lecturer at the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), Cambodia. He is pursuing his MS in agronomy at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) as a scholar under the Southeast Asian Upland Agriculture Fellowship jointly supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada and SEARCA. His paper is based on his thesis titled “Evaluation of seed quality of some upland rice farmers in Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia.”

Through his research, Mr. Sophal hopes “to provide farmers technology-based production options that could potentially improve their current yield and income levels.” (ECAсило)



Mr. Sophal explains his poster paper at the back-to-back conference jointly organized by SEARCA, IDRC, UHOH, and the Thai Royal Project Foundation.

Snapshots



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (left), SEARCA Director, briefs Dr. Steve J. Staal, Regional Representative for East and Southeast Asia, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), on the Center's programs and activities during the latter's visit on 22 January 2015 to discuss possible collaboration between ILRI and SEARCA.



Dr. Johann Moltmann, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Consultant, shares a GIZ initiative to develop and promote concepts for increased productivity brought about by sustainable and clean energy solutions during his visit to SEARCA on 3 February 2015 to explore prospects for collaboration in the areas of agriculture and energy.



Atty. María Leonor Gerona-Robredo (center), House Representative of the 3rd District of Camarines Sur, Philippines, paid a courtesy visit to Dr. Saguiguit (right) prior to delivering a seminar on "Ethics in Governance for Development" at SEARCA in conjunction with the 17th anniversary of the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Public Affairs and Development (UPLB-CPAD). Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr. (left), UPLB Chancellor, was also on hand to welcome her to the university.



Nineteen bio-business students of Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI) visited SEARCA on 20 February 2015 as part of their exposure trip to tropical agriculture and Philippine bio-business. They were accompanied by Dr. Nina Nocon-Shimoguchi (front row, fourth from right) and Dr. Takahiro Yamada (front row, seventh from right), both Assistant Professors at Tokyo NODAI, and Prof. Loida E. Mojica (front row, sixth from right) of the UPLB College of Economics and Management. Also in the photo is Ms. Maria Teresa B. Ferino (front row, fifth from right) of the Office of the Director who coordinated the group's visit to SEARCA.



Nagoya University (NU) officials led by Dr. Akira Yamauchi (fourth from left), Professor, Graduate School of Bioagricultural Sciences and Director of International Cooperation Center for Agricultural Education (ICCAE), visited SEARCA on 25 February 2015. The other members of the NU delegation are (from right) Dr. Editha C. Cedicol, Designated Professor, NU Asian Satellite Campuses Institute (ASCI); Dr. Fumio Isoda, Director and Professor, NU-ASCI; Dr. Kazuhito Kawakita, Dean and Professor, Graduate School of Bioagricultural Sciences; Dr. Takeshi Higashimura, Professor, Graduate School of International Development; Mr. Koji Oida, Chief, International Planning Division. They met with Dr. Saguiguit (third from left), SEARCA Director; Dr. Virginia R. Cardenas, Deputy Director for Administration; and Ms. Zacyl R. Jalotjot, Program Specialist for Graduate Education and Institutional Development, to explore the possibility of collaborating with SEARCA in establishing a satellite campus in the Philippines.

SEARCA joins int'l confab on hidden hunger

STUTT GART, Germany—More than 300 scientists and experts from around the world converged here to focus on the causes, consequences, and counter-strategies of the global problem on micronutrient deficiencies during early development, also known as “hidden hunger.” Organized by the University of Hohenheim (UHOH), the *2nd Hidden Hunger International Congress* was held here on 3-6 March 2015.

Among the participants were Philippine delegates, namely: Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA's Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development, and Dr. Normahitta P. Gordoncillo, Director of the Institute of Human Nutrition and Food, College of Human Ecology, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and SEARCA graduate alumna (MS applied nutrition, 1988). Dr. Cuaresma also attended the planning meeting of the Food Security Center, a global project of UHOH, which was held after the Congress.

Professor Hans K. Biesalski, Head of the Institute of Biological Chemistry and Nutrition and FSC Director, served as the overall chair of the Congress. In his welcome address, Prof. Biesalski talked about hidden hunger as a form

of chronic malnutrition, with potential negative consequences on long-term health. Referring to the lack of essential vitamins and minerals necessary for proper growth and development (e.g., Vitamin A, iron, iodine, zinc), hidden hunger affects health long before malnutrition becomes obvious.

The Congress had six sub-themes: (1) State of malnutrition in high-income countries, and evidences; (2) Micronutrient deficiencies within the first 1000-day-window in high income countries; (3) Nutrition transition and nutritional deficiencies in low-income countries; (4) Reasons for hidden hunger; (5) Consequences of hidden hunger; and (6) Interventions to improve nutrition security from the perspectives of various sectors.

Lectures of experts were followed by panel discussions that addressed the links and gaps between science and reality in all parts of the world. As the conference brought together various disciplines, discussions on hidden hunger were from the perspectives of nutrition, medicine, the social sciences, economics, and agriculture. As a whole, the Congress was a reiteration of support to the First 1000 Days Initiative in recognition of the critical period in a child's growth and development with great implications in the latter years.

The irony of being obese yet hungry because of consuming food with too much calories and little

micronutrients became a subject of contention regardless of being in a high- or low-income country. At the same time, the double burden of malnutrition—that is, having stunting, wasting, and obesity—pose a challenge to the many experts who recognize the scarcity of resources in public health interventions. The Congress also observed exchanges reflecting differing opinions on the value of immediate food fortification and supplementation versus long-term solutions requiring behavioral change and movements in the food production system, only to be convinced that both are not necessarily exclusive of each other.

The insightful inputs at the Congress include emphasis on the overarching need to translate nutrient needs into food-based dietary goals. Dr. Nicole Darmon, a nutritionist and an epidemiologist from the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, stirred the audience with her question, “Do healthy, yet expensive foods always mean nutritious food?” in her presentation titled “Food price policies improve diet quality while increasing socioeconomic inequalities in nutrition.” Dr. Craig Gundersen, Professor of Agricultural Strategy at the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, University of Illinois, was emphatic on the importance of measuring food and nutrition insecurity among countries in nutrition transition

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RELC tapped to train IDRC-SEARCA scholars

BANGKOK, Thailand—Eleven graduate scholars under the Upland Agriculture Fellowships Project of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada and SEARCA constituted the second batch of participants in the English Language Course organized by SEARCA and the Singapore-based SEAMEO Regional Language Centre (RELC) in collaboration with Kasetsart University (KU) in Thailand.

Among the participants were five new graduate scholars from Lao PDR and Myanmar under the project's second cohort. Of the 11 participants, some are on the way to their study post in the Philippines from their home countries, while the rest are studying in Thai universities.

Held on 12-16 January 2015 at the KU Faculty of Fisheries, the five-day course was a combination of English for academic purposes lectures as well as practical speaking and listening exercises. Ms. Elsa Yow Mei and Mr. Peter Argeros of RELC served as resource persons.

“English as a foreign language can be quite difficult and so practice is the key,” Ms. Yow reiterated during the training's closing program.

The English Language Course aims to enhance the scholars' English communication skills—both listening and speaking—and build their oral communication confidence before the start of their respective study programs. (JSLaranas)



IDRC-SEARCA scholars listen to Mrs. Elsa Yow Mei (standing), RELC instructor, during the English Language Course.



Mr. Peter Argeros (standing), RELC instructor, talks about the differences between the Merriam Webster and the Oxford English dictionaries.

Post ARD2014 validation, planning workshop held

A *Post ARD2014 Conference Validation and Planning Workshop* was organized by SEARCA to build on the wealth of information and policy recommendations from the *2nd International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia (ARD2014)* held in November 2014 by parlaying these into knowledge products easily accessible to stakeholders and into activities that engage policymakers.

The workshop was held on 6 March 2015 at SEARCA to discuss the policy recommendations put forward by the conference participants for feasibility, acceptability, and other parameters; as well as recommend strategies for the dissemination of policy recommendations to relevant bodies. The participants also planned the content, design, and structure of the book resulting from the conference.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, called the workshop a natural progression from the



Dr. Cielito F. Habito (center), ARD2014 Technical Adviser, facilitates the post ARD2014 workshop. He is flanked by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., (right), SEARCA Director, and Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, SEARCA Acting Program Head for Research and Development.

highly successful conference and said he hope that meeting the objectives of the workshop would translate to benefits for stakeholders and reinforce SEARCA's standing in the area of inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) in Southeast Asia.

Participants of the workshop were Dr. Francisco P. Fellizar, Jr. and Dr. Doris Capistrano, who both served as conference theme chair; and Dr. Geronimo M. Collado, Dr. Ma. Concepcion C. Lizada, and Dr. Luis Rey I. Velasco, all SEARCA Senior Fellows. Dr. Capistrano is also a SEARCA Senior Fellow.

The Center's Senior Fellows provide advice and guidance to the conceptualization of programs as well as technical inputs in project development and implementation. They also assist in establishing linkages and negotiating proposals with potential donors and partners of SEARCA.

Dr. Cielito F. Habito, ARD2014 Technical Adviser and also a SEARCA Senior Fellow, facilitated the workshop. Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, Acting Program Head for Research and Development (R&D), and staff of SEARCA's R&D Department and Knowledge Resources Unit provided administrative and technical support during the workshop. (CNGRogel/JABaculfo)

SEARCA co-organizes APAN climate risk mgmt workshop

MANILA, Philippines—A workshop on *Climate Risk Management Workshop in Planning and Investment Projects* held at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) headquarters was organized by ADB together with the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), and SEARCA. The workshop was held on 9-10 February 2015 under the auspices of the capacity building program of the Bangkok-based Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN).

SEARCA is APAN's Thematic Node for Agriculture in Southeast Asian for the promotion of climate change adaptation work in the region.

APAN's mission is to build climate change-resilient and sustainable human systems, ecosystems and economies through the mobilization of knowledge, enhanced institutional capacity, and informed decision-making processes, and facilitated access to finance and technologies.

With 40 participants who were mostly Southeast Asians, the workshop intended to strengthen understanding of climate change risks and approaches to climate risk management in sector planning and investment projects.

Workshop participants learned and discussed the nature of climate change risks to investment

projects; tools for climate risk screening; approaches for climate risk and vulnerability assessment, including technical and economic evaluation of adaptation options; and options for adaptation financing.

Case studies illustrated the challenges that climate change poses to investment projects, how these risks have been addressed in practice and lessons learned. The participants also shared their experiences in addressing climate risks in development planning and investment projects. (LLDDomingo with report from APAN)



Participants and organizers of the APAN Workshop. (Photo courtesy of APAN)

Representatives of 2014 SEAMEO-Japan ESD Award winner visit Japan

Students and teachers from Udonpittayanukoon School in Thailand, the first prize winner of the 2014 SEAMEO-Japan ESD Award which had the theme “Fostering Global Citizenship for Sustainable Future” visited Japan. ESD stands for Education for Sustainable Development.



The delegates of Udonpittayanukoon School pay a courtesy visit to Mr. Tomohiro Yamamoto (center), MEXT Parliamentary Vice-Minister.

The study visit program, undertaken on 9-12 February 2015, is part of the prize for the SEAMEO-Japan ESD Award first prize winner. It was organized by Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to provide an opportunity for the teachers and students to learn about the country’s ESD practices. The students and teachers also had an opportunity to meet with Mr Tomohiro Yamamoto, the Parliamentary Vice-Minister of MEXT, and to visit Ichikawa Gakuen School, a UNESCO Associated School.



Udonpittayanukoon School teachers and students learn about the history of education in Japan at the Museum of MEXT.

The four-day study visit gave the teachers and students an eye-opening experience on how the concept of ESD is applied in Japanese schools. The first-hand exposure aimed to inspire them in their future projects and activities in ESD at home in Thailand.

The SEAMEO-Japan ESD Award is a joint initiative of Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) and MEXT to promote ESD practices in schools and communities in Southeast Asian countries. Since 2012, the award has been given annually under a new theme that highlights emerging issues in the region related to ESD.



The delegates visit Ichikawa Gakuen School, a Super Science High School and a UNESCO Associated School.

The winners of the SEAMEO-Japan ESD Award in 2014 under the theme of “Fostering Global Citizenship for Sustainable Future” are Udonpittayanukoon School, Thailand (1st prize), Fairfield Methodist School (Primary), Singapore (2nd prize), and St. George’s Girl’s School, Malaysia (3rd prize). (Report from SEAMEO Secretariat)



The school global citizenship program titled “3 PLACES” and a Thai folk dance are presented by the students of Udonpittayanukoon School.

SEARCA donates books to public schools

LOS BAÑOS, Philippines—As part of SEARCA's Community Involvement Program (CIP), the Center donated science, mathematics, and language textbooks and reference materials to 10 elementary schools and four high schools here on 27 February 2015. The aim is to improve the library collection of public schools in Los Baños and provide a better learning experience for the students.

The schools that received the book donations were Los Baños Central Elementary School, Bambang Elementary School, Bayog Elementary School, Bernardo N. Calara Elementary School, Lalakay Elementary School, Maahas Elementary School, Malinta Elementary School, Paciano Rizal Elementary School, San Antonio Elementary School, Tadolac Elementary School, Los Baños National High School (LBNHS)-Main Campus,

LBNHS—Poblacion Annex, LBNHS-Bayog Annex, and Tuntungin Putho National High School.

SEARCA acquired the donated books from its partners with funds from voluntary contributions from its staff and other fund-raising activities of the Center.

The book donation was carried out by the SEARCA team composed of the Office of the Director,

Human Resources Management Unit (HRMU), and the Social and Wellness Activities Committee (SWAC). The team also assessed other educational requirements of the schools which SEARCA may address in its next CIP activities.

Through these CIP initiatives, SEARCA contributes to the development of its host community and its immediate environs, particularly in the areas of education and social welfare. (EGPandanan)



Students of Los Baños Central Elementary School receive science, mathematics, and language textbooks and reference materials from SEARCA.

Search is on for next Umali Awardee

The search for candidates for the Dioscoro L. Umali Achievement Award in Agricultural Development, or Umali Award, continues.

The Umali Award recognizes exemplary Southeast Asians whose work in the region has provided exceptionally significant positive impact on the development of agriculture and the improvement of the quality of life in rural communities.

The award is named after the illustrious Dr. Dioscoro L. Umali who was an educator, institution-builder, science statesman, development luminary, and prime mover of agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia in his time. He was the founding director of SEARCA and a National Scientist of the Philippines whose scholarship and quest for excellence fueled a vision for a progressive Southeast Asia. Likewise, his leadership in the field of agriculture has led to the development of the University of the Philippines College of Agriculture, now University of the Philippines Los Baños, into a premier institution of higher learning in Asia.

Since the Umali Award was launched in 2007, there have been four recipients:

- Dr. Vo Tong Xuan (2008), a Vietnamese agronomist who has promoted diversified and sustainable agriculture
- Dr. Charan Chantalakhana (2009), a Thai pioneer in cattle and buffalo genetic improvement who has promoted smallholder farming systems
- Dr. Ramon C. Barba (2011), a Filipino plant scientist whose mango flower-induction technology had enhance the productivity of important crops and the food processing industry
- Dr. Sjarifudin Baharsjah (2013), an Indonesian public servant and development advocate whose pioneering of the agribusiness systems concept in his country to promote agricultural development led to improved incomes and welfare of small farmers

Nominations for the next Umali Awardee should be sent to SEARCA c/o the Umali Award Secretariat or via email at umali_award@searca.org.



Conferred biennially, the Umali Award comes with a cash prize of USD 10,000. The Umali Award is a joint initiative of SEARCA, National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) of the Philippines, and Dioscoro L. Umali Foundation (DLUF). (CNGRogel)

Alumni Notes

NOMINATIONS FOR OUTSTANDING SEARCA ALUMNI NOW OPEN

SEARCA is now accepting nominations for The Outstanding SEARCA Scholarship Alumni.

For the first time, SEARCA will recognize its outstanding scholarship alumni who have personified the Center's values and philosophy and have distinguished themselves through their personal achievements, professional accomplishments, public service, and other meritorious endeavors.

There are five award categories: Teaching, Research, Public Service/Polycymaking, Nongovernment organization/Advocacy, and Private Sector/Agribusiness Entrepreneurship.

Individuals, organizations, and alumni associations are encouraged to nominate outstanding alumni for this prestigious award.

Nomination forms and other requirements are accessible from the SEARCA website at www.searca.org.

Recipients of The Outstanding SEARCA Scholarship Alumni will be feted during SEARCA's 50th Anniversary celebration in November 2016. The award comes with a plaque and cash prize. The awardees will also be featured in SEARCA's 50th Anniversary coffee table book and invited to a forum that coincides with the anniversary festivities. (JSLaranas)

DESTURA CONFERRED PROFESSOR EMERITUS

The University of Eastern Philippines has conferred the Professor Emeritus title on Dr. Pedro D. Destura (PhD, agricultural education, 1978), former UEP President (1990-2007), in recognition of his meritorious academic service and excellence in his field.

The conferment ceremony was held during UEP's 54th Commencement Exercises on 27 March 2015. Dr. Destura and the three other retired professors who were given the title were feted for having "given, in their own capacities, the prime of their lives to the development and strengthening of UEP as an educational institution."

In particular, UEP said the university benefited from Dr. Destura's "national and international exposures; he transformed the school into a

comprehensive university, the largest in Region 8, and initiated the school's accreditation process in order to adhere to the standards of quality education whereby the service area is likewise benefited from its instruction, research, production, and extension activities." (Report from UEP website)

BARCELLANO APPOINTED CAMPUS DIRECTOR

Dr. Emerson C. Barcellano (PhD, forestry, 2005) was appointed Campus Director of the Kalinga-Apayao State College (KASC)-Rizal Campus in August 2014.

KASC is a public college in the Philippines. It has three campuses in the province of Kalinga. The main campus is in Tabuk.

Dr. Barcellano, Professor 5, succeeded Forester Victorino Bayed as KASC-Rizal Campus Director. (LLDDomingo)

THEARITH NAMED DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Mr. Pheak Thearith (MS, development communication, 2010) has been appointed Deputy Director of the Department of Software and Content at the General Department of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) of the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, Cambodia. Prior to his appointment, he served as staff at the Office of the Council of Ministers, Cambodia.

TIMORESE SEARCA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS INDUCTED

DILI, Timor-Leste—The Timorese SEARCA graduate alumni have elected the first set of officers of the newly formed SEARCA Alumni Association of Timor-Leste (SAAT) led by Mr. Agostinho da Costa Ximenes as President.

The other SAAT officers are Mr. Jose Nelson Salsinha, Vice President; Mr. Mario Jose Morais, Executive Secretary; Mr. Afonso Candido and Mr. Mateus de Jesus Gomez, both Public Relations Officers; and Mr. Natalino Babo Martins, Country Representative to the Regional SEARCA Fellows Association (RSFA).

Eighteen Timorese SEARCA alumni were present at the induction ceremony held on 15 January 2015 at the Early Sun Restaurant in Dili. The oath of office was administered by Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development (GEID), and Mr. Raimundo Mau, Director General, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF). It was witnessed by Dr. Acacio Cardoso Amaral, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa'e (UNTL) and Country Representative of Timor-Leste to the SEARCA Governing Board; Engr. Lourenco Borges Fontes, MAF Director General; and Ms. Blessie P. Saez, SEARCA GEID Assistant.

With its officers inducted, SAAT's next move is to register the association with the Ministry of Justice to obtain a legal personality that will enable it to transact business and sponsor and undertake events. (BPSaez/JSLaranas)



Top photo shows Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (right), SEARCA Program Head for GEID, and Mr. Raimundo Mau, MAF Director General, administering the oath of office during the induction of SAAT officers (in bottom photo). Capturing the moment on camera is Dr. Acacio Cardoso Amaral (leftmost in top photo) of UNTL.

SEARCA Prof Chairholder tackles features, mgmt of marginal uplands in Phi

BAYBAY, Philippines—Although marginal uplands are widespread in Southeast Asia and other parts of the humid tropics, until now, there is no exact and standard definition of what marginal uplands are.

This was revealed by Dr. Victor B. Asio, Professor VI of Soil Science and Geo-ecology and Vice President for Planning, Resource Generation and External Affairs, Visayas States University, in his SEARCA Professorial Chair Lecture titled *Biophysical Characteristics and Sustainable Management of Marginal Uplands in the Philippines* delivered on 27 March 2015 at the VSU PhilRootcrops Training Hall.

Most of the resource-poor farmers in the developing world dwell in these risk-prone



Dr. Victor B. Asio delivers his SEARCA Professorial Chair Lecture.

marginal environments, Dr. Asio said. In particular, he noted that tribal communities in the Philippines—the poorest, most vulnerable, and most food-insecure households in the country—are living and farming on marginal uplands because they have been forced to move by more powerful groups so that they lost control of their ancestral homelands.

Dr. Asio also cited the Asia Forestry Network findings that poor families continue to migrate to the uplands due to failure of government policies and programs to effectively address unemployment and inequitable land and income distribution in the lowlands.

Uplands, according to Dr. Asio, are the undulating and steep lands that range in elevation from near sea level to about 1,000 meters. It gave him the idea to postulate that marginal uplands are those undulating, hilly or steep mountainous lands that have very low crop productivity due to poor soil quality, limited water availability, and unfavorable socioeconomic conditions identical to those of “degraded uplands.”

Dr. Asio elaborated that the biophysical characteristics of marginal uplands are affected by climate, geology and geomorphology, vegetation, and soil constraints. He pointed out that aside from being common in the humid tropics and undulating and mountainous topography, marginal uplands are also underlain by various geological materials and with low biodiversity.

“The soils are infertile due to one or more soil constraints to crop production caused by deforestation, shifting cultivation, and destructive land use which enhanced soil erosion,” Dr. Asio averred.

He said the various physical and chemical constraints that contributed to marginal soil infertility include acid or alkaline pH, low organic matter content and low nutrient status, high electrical conductivity, shallow solum, compaction, low rate of water infiltration, low water holding capacity, and unfavorable slopes.

Some sustainable management strategies identified by Dr. Asio that could help resolve the issues—depending on soil characteristics, cropping systems, and socioeconomic factors—are agroforestry, sloping agricultural land technology (SALT), integrated nutrient management for crop production, and rainforest farming.

The SEARCA Regional Professorial Chair was awarded in 2014 to Dr. Asio along with four other academics from the University of the Philippines Los Baños and Universiti Putra Malaysia. The award recognizes Dr. Asio's outstanding contribution to agricultural research and development as academician in Southeast Asia who has championed inclusive and sustainable agriculture and rural development through his instruction, research, and extension activities in the country and in the region. (Report from JFMBaldos)

Value chain/ from page 5

of the study will focus on Regions I, II, III, and IVA, all on the island of Luzon.

The team also prepared eight different questionnaires covering farmers producing milk and those selling live animals to abattoirs, processors of milk and milk products, livestock traders, wholesaler-retailers and retailers of milk,

butchers in slaughterhouses, auction markets, meat dealers/wholesalers, and retailers. The questionnaires for farmers and processors was pre-tested in March 2015 in General Trias, Cavite.

On the invitation of PCC, Dr. Lantican delivered a lecture on VCA in March 2015 to an audience of more than 50 PCC personnel and key officials led by Dr. Arnel del Barrio, PCC Executive Director. The lecture highlighted the similarities and

differences of supply chains and value chains, rationale for using the value chain approach, requirements for creating a functional value chain, and the four major elements of the VCA framework.

The research team is scheduled to gather primary and secondary data for carabao milk and milk products and carabeef in Region I on 7-27 April 2015. (Reports from HMCustodio and FALantican)

SEARCA joins/ from page 10

where food insecurity and obesity co-exist. Dr. Keith West, Professor of Infant and Child Nutrition and Director of the Center for Human Nutrition at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, opined that a lot of congenital disorders, which used to be explained by gene effects, are now actually nutrition-environment related.

The Congress topped the build-up of interesting concepts, shared evidences, and promising

solutions with a challenge on how to streamline ideas into doable action points. The Congress made it clear that growing more food alone is not enough to end hidden hunger. As a research fellow emeritus with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) Klaus von Grebmer puts it, making hidden hunger visible through effective communication can certainly be the first step. (NPGordoncillo)

ERRATUM: On page 5 of the December 2014 issue of *The SEARCA Diary* in the photo of German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)-SEARCA scholars with officials of the German Embassy in the Philippines, Mr. Michael Fuchs, First Secretary and Cultural Attaché of Germany to the Philippines, was erroneously identified as H. E. Thomas Ossowski, German Ambassador to the Philippines. We apologize for this oversight.- Ed.

Indonesian, Vietnamese top 2014 SEARCA Photo Contest

An Indonesian bagged the first prize in the 2014 SEARCA Photo Contest, which had the theme *Climate Change and Agriculture in Southeast Asia: Faces of Vulnerability and Resilience*.

The millions of people in Southeast Asia are among the hardest hit by the consequences of climate change, which are increasingly devastating and far-reaching. At the same time, these people are also the ones for whom climate change resilience is most essential and critical.

SEARCA was after photographs that emphasize climate change vulnerability and resilience initiatives at the individual, household, and community levels.

Mr. Aji Styawan of Demak-Jawa Tengah won the top prize for his photograph depicting a 75-year-old female farmer harvesting rice using a boat because of flooding.

His photo bested 1,224 other entries submitted by 340 other photographers from the 11 countries in Southeast Asia, namely: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam.

The contest, which ran from 15 September to 30 November 2014, awarded entries that best captured how vulnerable Southeast Asian agricultural communities are to climate change or what these communities are doing to respond to the challenges of climate change.

The second prize went to a photograph showing a fisherman leaning against his boat surrounded by parched, cracked earth by Truong Huu Hung of Binh Thuan, Vietnam.

A photograph showing a man on a boat in a flooded area that used to be a forest, by Pham Van Thanh of Vietnam, won Third Prize.

The People's Choice Award, chosen by 733 people via Facebook voting, was won by Muammar Ramadhan of Indonesia for his photograph

depicting a farmer growing chili, a more climate-resilient crop, in a field previously planted to paddy.

The winners received cash prizes of USD 800, 500, 300, and 200, respectively. The winning photographs and finalists are showcased in a photo gallery on the SEARCA website at <http://searca.org/photocontest/>.

The SEARCA Photo Contest, which began in 2006, aims to catch a glimpse of the contemporary issues in agriculture and rural development in the SEAMEO region, through quality photographic images that easily capture the current state and future endeavors of SEARCA's major stakeholders: the agriculture and rural communities in Southeast Asia. (ADGMadrid)



First prize, Aji Styawan



Second prize, Truong Huu Hung



Third prize, Pham Van Thanh



People's Choice, Muammar Ramadhan