

**ICARDA News**  
**INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH**  
**IN THE DRY AREAS**

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## ICARDA Celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

### Future Holds Challenges, Opportunities

Aleppo, Syria (16 May )  
H.E. Dr Nouredin Mona, Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, Syria, addressing the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary guests, pledged his country's continued "full support" to help ICARDA achieve its mission of poverty reduction and improved nutrition, working on behalf "not only of poor farmers in Syria, but farmers worldwide."

Using crop varieties developed in partnership with ICARDA, "Syria is now an



*Dignitaries from all over Central and West Asia and North Africa and beyond joined ICARDA staff, management, and Board of Trustees members for Presentation Day 2002, which also marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Center's founding.*



**H.E. Dr Nouredin Mona,**  
**Minister of Agriculture and**  
**Agrarian Reform, Syria**

exporter of wheat, barley, lentils, and sometimes chickpea," due to the foresight of the Syria's late past President, Hafez Al-Assad, said H.E. Dr Mona. The commitment to "partnership" based on "common interest" for the good of the poor continues with Syria's President Bashar Al-Assad, the Minister said.

Syria has joined the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, and has pledged an annual contribution of US\$500,000.

ICARDA Board of Trustees Chair, Mr Robert Havener presented a history of ICARDA, in which he acknowledged the key role played by the late President Hafez Al-Assad in the establishment of the Center in Syria. The contributions made by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada; the Rockefeller Foundation; the Food Foundation, and others were also acknowledged. The Board Chair said ICARDA has achieved a great deal, but much remains to be done, a theme echoed by the speakers who followed him in the day-long symposium.

Gains have been made, but "hunger and poverty still loom" in many parts of the developing world, "threatening past achievements," said Dr Mervat Bedawi, Director, Technical Department, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), Kuwait.



**Mr Robert Havener**



**Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy**



**Dr Mervat Bedawi**



**Dr Peter Cooper**



**Guest speaker, Dr Per Pinstrup-Andersen, Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington DC, receives a souvenir from ICARDA Director General Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy, assisted by ICARDA Board of Trustees Chair, Mr Robert Havener.**



**Guest Speaker, Dr Marc Van Montagu, Professor Emeritus, Ghent University, Belgium, receives a souvenir from Prof. Dr El-Beltagy. Dr Van Montagu is founder of the Institute for Plant Biotechnology for Developing Countries.**



**Presentation Day 2002 saw the launch of ICARDA25: A Promise of Hope 1977–2002, a hardbound history of ICARDA written by the Center's former Director General (1981-1987), Dr Mohamed A. Nour. On hand to launch the book was Dr Nour's daughter, Johara, who accepted a copy on her father's behalf from H.E. the Minister Dr Mona (center) Mr Robert Havener (not seen in the picture) and Prof. Dr El-Beltagy. Dr Nour was greatly missed but his eye surgery stood in the way of his being personally present to see the launch of the book. The ICARDA family sends its best wishes to Dr Nour for a speedy recovery.**

"The food gap cannot be closed by expanding [production] area, but through increases in productivity achieved through science," said Dr Bedawi. ICARDA has always enjoyed a special relationship with AFESD, 'a relationship earned, through its research record,' she said.

Dr Peter Cooper, Director, Natural Resources and Environment, IDRC, flagged water and climate change as dominant issues. Water, he said, is becoming increasingly scarce and increasingly a matter of international concern, while climate change is already occurring, making dry areas of West Asia and North Africa hotter and drier.

As such, ICARDA's mandate is "increasingly relevant and deserving of increasing support from donors," said Dr Cooper, who worked at ICARDA for 11 years until 1989, and is now participating in the Future Harvest Consortium to Rebuild Agriculture in Afghanistan, which is led by ICARDA.

ICARDA Director General Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy briefed the gathering on the challenges facing the world's

drylands, and pointed a way forward for the Center and the region by harnessing the modern lots of science. He said ICARDA would give higher priority to helping rural communities add value to their agricultural produce, and would make best use of new technologies, such as biotechnology, geographic information systems, remote sensing and computer expert systems to increase agricultural productivity.

Everyone has a responsibility to promote respect for "human diversity" and protect the "natural wealth of our planet. ICARDA, for its part, is fully committed to the task of producing international public goods in agriculture, and is thus contributing to food security, protection of the environment, and poverty alleviation," said Prof. Dr El-Beltagy.

Dr Per Pinstrup-Andersen, Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington DC, said that efforts to achieve food security will be affected by globalization, which he said can be managed to help the poor; technological change, including use of biotechnology to improve agricultural productivity; and natural resources degradation, water scarcity, emerging health problems, and climate change, all of which pose a challenge to policy-makers and researchers.

At the World Food Summit in 1996, participating nations pledged to reduce by half the number of malnourished people in the world by 2015. To do this, research and policy initiatives must "target low-income people without access to sufficient food," said Dr Pinstrup-Andersen, winner of the World Food Prize in 2001.

Much hope is being placed in biotechnology, including development of transgenic plants, to help increase crop productivity. Dr Marc Van Montagu, Professor Emeritus, Ghent University, Belgium, said that biotechnology will benefit the poor, and that much of the public debate surrounding genetically modified foods is unfortunately ill informed.

"We have to learn how to use our emerging knowledge. We need to add genes conferring drought and salt tolerance to elite cultivars, and we need to improve the agronomic traits of drought and salt tolerant cultivars," said Dr Van Montagu, founder of the Institute for Plant Biotechnology for Developing Countries.

# ICARDA Says “Thank You”

*At a dinner reception, hosted by ICARDA for its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary guests in the Royal Hall of the Aleppo Citadel, Board Chair Mr Robert Havener and Director General Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy took the opportunity to recognize the outstanding contributions of some of the Centers’ supporters to agricultural research and development.*



**H.E. Dr Issam El-Zaim (right), Minister of Industry and former Minister of State for Planning Affairs, Syria, was presented with a plaque of recognition by H.E. Dr Mona, Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, Syria, in the company of Mr Havener and Prof. Dr El-Beltagy.**



**H.E. Mr Tusunboy Rakhmatov (second from right), Minister of Agriculture, Tajikistan, is honored with plaque of recognition presented by H.E. the Minister Dr Mona, in the company of Prof Dr El-Beltagy (left); Mr Havener (second from left); and Dr Mekhlis Suleimenov (right).**



**Prof. Dr El-Beltagy (right) presents a plaque of recognition to H.E. Dr Yousef Abu Safieh, Minister of Environment, Palestinian Authority, in the company of Mr Havener (left) and H.E. the Minister Dr Mona.**



**H.E. Dr Mahmoud Duwayri, Minister of Agriculture, Jordan, says a few words at the Citadel dinner after being recognized by, from right, H.E. the Minister Dr Mona; Mr Havener; and Prof. Dr El-Beltagy.**



**H.E. Mr Mustafa Ould Maouloud, Minister of Rural Development and Environment, Mauritania, receives a plaque of recognition from Prof. Dr El-Beltagy (left), in the company of Mr Havener, and H.E. the Minister Dr Mona (right).**



**H.E. Ali A. Abdallah, Minister of Agriculture, Lebanon, receives a plaque of recognition from Mr Havener (second from left), in the company of Prof. Dr El-Beltagy (left) and H.E. the Minister Dr Mona.**



After being recognized at the Citadel dinner, H.E. Mr Tusunboy Rakhmatov (second from left), Minister of Agriculture, Tajikistan, returned the compliment by presenting Prof Dr El-Beltagy (right) with a portrait carpet.



The Center also bid farewell to Board member Dr Iwao Kobori (center), who was presented with a commemorative plaque by Mr Havener (left) and Prof. Dr El-Beltagy at the Citadel dinner.



From right, Dr Fadia Noussir accepts an award on behalf of the late Dr Ahmed Kamel, former Senior Pathologist and Regional Coordinator for North Africa. The award was presented by Board of Trustees Chair Mr Robert Havener; Director General Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy; and ICARDA Assistant Director General (at large) Dr Mohan Saxena.



Board Member Dr Khalil Khazzaka, Director General, Agricultural Research Institute, Lebanon, was recognized for his contribution to agricultural research and development.



The Center bid farewell to former Board of Trustees member, Dr Mouin Hamze. From left, Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy and Mr Robert Havener present Dr Hamze with a commemorative plaque.



The late Moustapha Bounejmate, former Forage and Feed Legume Production Specialist at ICARDA, was honored with an award for his outstanding services, received on his behalf by Dr Hamid Nargisse, DG, INRA, Morocco.

## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary a Homecoming for IPGRI Director General

ICARDA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations were occasion for homecoming for Dr Geoffrey Hawtin, Director General of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), Rome. In the early years of the Center, Dr Hawtin was the first Leader of ICARDA's Food Legume Improvement Program, and was later the Center's first Assistant Director General for International Cooperation. To help mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Dr Hawtin presented a commemorative plaque to ICARDA Director General Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy. The two CGIAR Centers are close partners, and IPGRI's West Asia and North Africa office is located at ICARDA headquarters.



IPGRI Director General, Geoffrey Hawtin (second from right), presents a plaque to Director General Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of ICARDA. They were joined at the ceremony by Dr Mohan Saxena, ICARDA's Assistant Director General (left), and Dr George Ayyad (right), Director of IPGRI-West Asia and North Africa.

## Distinguished Pathologist, Former Board Chair Honored

**F**ormer ICARDA Board of Trustees Chair (1994-1999) and distinguished plant pathologist, Dr Alfred Bronnimann, cut the ribbon on a laboratory named in his honor on the occasion of the Center's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

At the ceremony to recognize his contributions to the Center and the field of agricultural science, Dr Bronnimann said he was "surprised

and proud" and pledged that he "will forever be an ambassador for ICARDA."

Dr Bronnimann, a Swiss national, was for many years Director of the Swiss Federal Research Station for Agronomy. He also has had a long association and held several distinguished advisory positions with the Future Harvest Centers of the Consultative Group on International



*Dr Alfred Bronnimann cuts the ribbon on the laboratory named in his honor. He is assisted by his wife Elizabeth and H.E. Dr Noureddin Mona.*



*Dr Alfred Bronnimann (third from right) expressed his surprise and pride at having an ICARDA laboratory named in his honor during Presentation Day 2002. At his side for the ceremony were his wife Elizabeth, H.E. Dr Noureddin Mona (right), Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, Syria; ICARDA Director General Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy (left); and ICARDA Board of Trustees Chair, Mr Robert Havener.*

Agricultural Research.

Dr Bronnimann earned his higher academic degrees from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich.

Congratulations Dr Bronnimann!

## Ribbon Cut on Enrico Porceddu Conference Room

**I**CARDA management, staff, and Board members honored the contributions made by Dr Enrico Porceddu by naming a conference

room after him at a ceremony during the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. Dr Porceddu was Board of Trustees Chair, 1989-1994.



*Former Board of Trustees Chair, Dr Enrico Porceddu (second from right), reminisced fondly about his association with ICARDA at the opening of a conference room named in his honor on Presentation Day 2002. Present at the ceremony were H.E. Dr Noureddin Mona (second from left), Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, Syria; ICARDA Board of Trustees Chair, Mr Robert Havener (left); and ICARDA Director General Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy.*



*Dr Enrico Porceddu (right) cuts the ribbon on the Dr. Enrico Porceddu Conference Room, assisted by H.E. Dr Noureddin Mona.*

Dr Porceddu has had a long and distinguished career in plant breeding, genetics, and research management, so it is fitting that his conference room be located in ICARDA's Plant Genetic Resources Unit.

Congratulations Dr Porceddu!