

ICARDA News
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
IN THE DRY AREAS

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German Federal Parliamentarians Visit ICARDA

Aleppo, Syria (13 June): ICARDA was honored to welcome a delegation from the German Federal Parliament on 9 May 2002. The distinguished group was headed by Ms Dagmar Schmidt, Member of the Development Cooperation Committee (AWZ), and included Mr Siegfried Helias, Member, AWZ; Mr Carl-Detlev Freiherr von Hammerstein, Member, Finance Committee (Haushaltsausschuss); and Ms Hanna Wolf, Member, Committee for Families, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the Committee for Culture and Media. They were accompanied by Mr Herbert Schmitter, Cultural Attaché from the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in Damascus, and Mr Zafer Sadaoui, Honorary Consul, FRG Consulate in Aleppo. Dr Cherifa Magdi assisted the delegation with translation.

Welcoming the delegation, Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy, Director General, emphasized the close ties that bind



Director General Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy (right) briefs German Federal Parliamentarians, led by Ms Dagmar Schmidt (at the DG's immediate right), on ICARDA's research and its impact in dry areas during their recent mission to the Center.

ICARDA with Germany. These are based not only on the financial contributions made by the German government to ICARDA's core and restricted core budgets, but also on the strong and productive linkages with Centers of Excellence in Germany, which include joint research with, and training of, MSc and PhD students registered with German universities.

The Director General briefed the delegation on ICARDA's mandate and the strategies adopted by the Center in implementing its research and human resource development agenda in partnership with the national programs in Central and West Asia and North Africa. The problems associated with achieving sustainable use of natural resources, preventing land degradation, protecting the environment, enhancing water-use efficiency, achieving food security, reducing poverty and preventing rural-urban and South-North migration need to be tackled on a priority basis in the region. The research being carried out by the Center aims at generating solutions to these problems in partnership with all stakeholders, Prof. Dr El-Beltagy said.

The delegation showed keen interest in the Center's work in the area of natural resource management, particularly biodiversity conservation and enhancing



Members of the German Federal Parliamentary Delegation and accompanying officials, beginning third from left, Mr Zafer Sadaoui, Honorary Consul, FGR Consulate in Aleppo; Mr Herbert Schmitter, Cultural Attaché from the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Damascus; Mr Carl-Detlev Freiherr von Hammerstein, Member, Finance Committee (Haushaltsausschuss); Ms Hanna Wolf, Member, Committee for Families, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, and the Committee for Culture and Media; Mr Siegfried Helias, Member of the Development Cooperation Committee (AWZ); Ms Dagmar Schmidt (delegation leader) Member, AWZ; Dr Gaby Tabbah, Member of the Executive Bureau, Mohafazat of Aleppo. Guiding the visitors on their tour of the Center were, from left, Dr Mohan Saxena, Assistant Director General; Dr Jurgen Diekmann, Farm Manager; and from right, Dr Tom Blake, Germplasm Program Leader; Dr William Erskine, Assistant Director General for Research; and Dr Michael Baum, Biotechnologist.

ecosystems of the region. They were happy to learn of the collaborative linkages and the division of responsibility between ICARDA and the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), Syria, as both centers receive support from the German government. The delegation greatly appreciated ICARDA's ongoing efforts to assist Palestine and Afghanistan

At a working lunch with German staff and the senior management of ICARDA, the members of the delegation saw a video presentation of ICARDA's work and its impact in the dry areas. They then visited the fields and laboratories where they met with ICARDA scientists. Because of time constraint, only a few key activities could be visited. These included: farmer participatory barley breeding; production of high quality seed for kick-starting seed production in Afghanistan; water productivity research; work on small-ruminant production and management, including small-scale milk processing; and use of biotechnological tools in improving the efficiency of crop improvement for dry areas.

At the end of the visit, Ms Schmidt thanked the Director General and the scientists for providing an excellent overview of ICARDA's activities, and congratulated the Center for its achievements. The Director General, Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy, thanked the delegation members for having included ICARDA in their visit to Syria and invited them for a longer visit in the future.



Ms Dagmar Schmidt keenly observes the work being done to improve the nutritional quality of grasspea through somaclonal techniques in the biotechnology laboratory, as explained by Dr Michael Baum (right), ICARDA Biotechnologist. Also in the photo are, starting third from right, Mr Zafer Sadaoui, Mr Carl-Detlev Freiherr von Hammerstein, and Mr Herbert Schmitter.



Ms Dagmar Schmidt tastes salt-bush being raised in semicircular basins as part of water-harvesting research.