

ICARDA News
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
IN THE DRY AREAS

P.O. Box 5466, Aleppo, Syria
Phone: (963-21) 2213433, 2213477, 2225112, 2225012
Fax: (963-21) 2213490, 2225105; E-mail: ICARDA@CGIAR.ORG

Afghanistan Minister of Agriculture Visits ICARDA

Aleppo, Syria (8 August): H. E. Mr. Sayed Hussain Anwari, Minister of Agriculture, Afghanistan, along with 10 high-ranking officials from the Interim Afghan Government, visited ICARDA on 31 July to 3 August. The Minister and his delegation members were received by Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy, Director General. Their visit to ICARDA involved discussion of key areas of importance to rebuilding agriculture in Afghanistan and the signing of a comprehensive agreement of collaboration.

Prof. El-Beltagy briefed the delegation on the mission and mandate of ICARDA and the lead role of the Center in the Future Harvest Consortium to Rebuild Agriculture in Afghanistan. He explained ICARDA's research on combating drought and alleviating poverty throughout the CWANA region and how those research results could be effec-



Prof. Dr Adel El-Beltagy (center), DG, welcomed H.E. Mr Sayed Hussain Anwari (right), Minister of Agriculture, Afghanistan, and his delegation members, to ICARDA and presented an update on ICARDA-led Future Harvest Consortium activities. Seated on left is Dr Nasrat Wassimi, leader of the ICARDA project in Afghanistan.

tively translated to address the needs of Afghanistan. ICARDA is looking forward to strengthening its collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture in identifying the needs, establishing priorities and designing programs that will work for Afghanistan, he said. With over 40 different nationalities represented by its staff, and its close linkages with regional and international organizations and advanced institutes in industrialized countries, ICARDA is uniquely placed in the region to work in partnership with the Afghan people, he emphasized.

Approximately 85% of Afghans depend on agriculture for their livelihoods and 60% of exports from Afghanistan are agricultural products.

The delegation toured the ICARDA facility and met with Dr Richard Thomas to discuss



H.E. Mr Sayed Hussain Anwari, Minister of Agriculture, Afghanistan, and his delegation members, with ICARDA senior management.



Wrap-up meeting with the senior management of ICARDA.

ment; livestock, feed and rangelands; and horticulture. He said that the needs assessment efforts will provide the building blocks for the Consortium's program. A workshop was held at ICARDA to review the recommendations of needs assessment on livestock on 14-17 July. The recommendations of the workshop will be forwarded to the Minister for review and approval.

The Afghanistan delegation visit prefaced the Future Harvest Consortium steering committee meeting, which was held at ICARDA on 7-8 August. H.E. Mr Mohammad Sharif, Deputy Minister

natural resource management, particularly that of land and water, and visited the laboratories of the Natural Resource Management Program. They also met with Dr Tom Blake to discuss crop improvement, and visited the Germplasm Program Laboratories. The use of cutting-edge science to make rapid progress figured prominently in the discussion. The delegation also visited CODIS, CBSU, GRU, Seed Unit and other research facilities. The Minister praised the progress with the seed program that brought 35,000 tons of wheat to Afghanistan for spring planting. He said that he greatly appreciated ICARDA's offer to train 25 Afghan scientists in seed production and the recent donation of over 450 publications for the Ministry of Agriculture Library. The Unit Head with whom the delegation interacted included Drs. Tony van Gastel, S. Varma, Zaid Abdul-Hadi, and Jan Konopka (Acting). Dr Samir El-Sebae Ahmed briefed the delegation on ICARDA's training activities.

The Minister and his delegation members, in a wrap-up meeting with ICARDA senior management, said that after 23 years of conflict and three years of continuous drought, the interim government is especially grateful for the assistance of USAID and the Future Harvest Consortium, led by ICARDA. While active efforts are currently underway, and the progress so far has been commendable, there remains a lot more to be done. Increased efforts are needed for rehabilitation of agriculture, including animal husbandry and forestry, mechanization of agriculture, and rebuilding infrastructures essential to achieving success. Communication remains a fundamental difficulty in rehabilitation efforts, the delegation said. The Minister outlined the lack of modern communication tools, such as satellite technology and computers. Prof. El-Beltagy assured the delegation of ICARDA's increased efforts in the areas identified, and hoped that the delegation's visit will add to the momentum of the Consortium activities.

The Minister also appreciated the Consortium's efforts in four key areas of needs assessment: seed systems and crop improvement; soil and water manage-



A comprehensive agreement of collaboration was signed by the Minister (right) and the Director General of ICARDA.

of Agriculture, Afghanistan, is a member of the steering committee, and participated in the meeting.

Dr Nasrat Wassimi, leader of ICARDA project in Afghanistan, was with the delegation throughout the visit, and offered invaluable support in interpreting from English to Farsi.

The Afghanistan delegation consisted of:

H.E. Mr Sayed Hussain Anwari, Minister of Agriculture

Mr Mirdad Gul Panjsheri, Advisor to the Minister

Mr Mohamad Masoom Mahmood, Head of Foreign Relations Dept., Ministry of Agriculture

Dr Sadiq Mudaber, President of NGO's Department of Ministry of Planning

Mr Habibullah Juma Khan, Head of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Planning

Mr Abdul Hadi Samad Zadeh, Agricultural Advisor to Interim Admin., Ministry of Agriculture

Mr Sayed Jan Sayed Esmail, Head of Fertilizer Company, Ministry of Agriculture

Ms Rahila Gul Mohamad, Dept. of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture,

Ms Sakina Ghulam Aziz, Agronomist, Ministry of Agriculture,

Ms Nazira Khan Mohamad, Dept. of Extension, Ministry of Agriculture

Ms Suhaila Mohsin, Secretary to H.E. the Minister of Agriculture

Visit to ICARDA Facilities



Seed Unit



Biotechnology Laboratory



Entomology Laboratory



Virology Laboratory



GIS Laboratory



Animal Health Laboratory--Quality Cheese



Animal Health Laboratory--Feed Block



Genebank



Computer and Biometric Services Unit



Library and Information Services Unit
