



Aleppo Declaration on the continuing threat of transboundary wheat disease

Borlaug Global Rust Initiative Coordination Conference

ICARDA, September 2009

Research leaders, scientists and donors from more than 26 countries met at ICARDA in Aleppo, Syria, and warned of potential invasions by transboundary wheat diseases (such as Ug99 black stem rust and stripe, or yellow rust), which threaten global food security, particularly in the highly vulnerable region that stretches from Eastern Africa to the Middle East/Near East to South Asia and beyond.

The Middle East, the cradle of agriculture where wheat cultivation began, is a primary center of genetic diversity. It is a great reservoir of breeding material and wild relatives of wheat that are vital for developing wheat varieties to combat many threats including drought, other climate change implications, and biotic threats to wheat.

This Declaration is a call for sustained action and a plan for the future – bringing together national, regional and global players, from farmers to national research and development organizations to global agencies. In particular, this Declaration is a commitment to establishing a global wheat rust reference laboratory, as well as improving resources and enhancing capacity development for national, regional and international facilities.

Following on from the Delhi Declaration in November 2008, and the technical workshop held at Obregon, Mexico in March 2009, we, the participants, reaffirm our commitment to the overarching objective of the Borlaug Global Rust Initiative (BGRI) of systematically reducing the world's vulnerability to stem, stripe (yellow), and leaf rusts of wheat and advocating/facilitating the evolution of a sustainable international food security system to contain the threat of wheat rusts and continue the enhancements in productivity required to meet future global demands for wheat.

In adopting this Declaration, we pledge to continue strong support for wheat rust prevention and control as a matter of national policy and international cooperation. We renew our commitment to fighting the spread of the disease in a coordinated manner, and commit ourselves to the following measures.

- 1. We affirm our commitment to establishing a global wheat rust reference laboratory, as well as maintaining and improving resources and capacity for national, regional and international facilities. This global wheat rust reference laboratory will be used as a repository for identifying new virulent races of the pathogen, as a site for race identification and analysis, and as an important location for training scientists from national programs.**

2. We reaffirm our resolve to collaborate closely and to commit the necessary resources to sustain the strategic fight against wheat rusts (including surveillance; identification of novel durable resistance genes including from landraces and wild relatives; breeding for resistance and seed production), and to build on our experience in the campaign against Ug99.
3. We recognize the imperative to strengthen capacity of national systems in developing countries while promoting international cooperation, considering the transboundary nature of these diseases.
4. We resolve to strengthen early warning, seed production and delivery systems and collaboration to allow us to anticipate wheat rust threats in the future as well as manage existing threats such as Ug99. This includes provision of sufficient support for testing sites in areas where virulent races of rust are established, such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen.
5. We agree to enhance our communication efforts for awareness and exchange of information, and develop a greater understanding of the needs and perceptions of all stakeholders.
6. We agree to strengthen our focus on building and implementing adoption pathways to combat the threat of wheat rusts and ensure real impact at farmer level.
7. We confirm support for coordinated socioeconomic assessment, policy analysis and advocacy at all levels, including aspects relating to food security and trade of wheat as well as implications for the resource-poor farmers.
8. These actions complement our existing commitments from the Delhi Declaration to:
 - Increase donor/investor assistance
 - Improve preparedness and policy support at national level
 - Continue information exchange
 - Build early warning systems
 - Strengthen the exploitation of genetic diversity through pre-breeding
 - Strengthen breeding for rust resistance
 - Accelerate release and seed multiplication of rust resistant varieties
 - Promote partnership of public sector and private sector partners for seed
 - Enhance research support and infrastructure
 - Ensure commitment by governments working with non-government and regional organizations

Participants

ICARDA, CIMMYT, FAO, Cornell University-USA, INRA-Algeria, CSIRO-Australia, University of Sydney-Australia, IAEA-Austria, BARI-Bangladesh, ARC-Egypt, CASP-Egypt, NARI-Eritrea, EIAR-Ethiopia, Kulumsa-Ethiopia, Fr. Strube Saatzucht GmbH and Co-Germany; ICAR- India, Sathguru Management consultants-India, SPII-Iran, NCARE-Jordan, KARI-Kenya, Al-muktar University al-Baida-Libya, INRA-Morocco, NARC-Nepal, Wheat Research Institute-Pakistan, PARC-Pakistan, Ministry of Agriculture-Saudi Arabia, ARC-Sudan, GCSAR-Syria, Tajik University-Tajikistan, INRAT-Tunisia, Field Crops Research Institute-Turkey, NARO-Uganda, University of California-USA, USAID, National Wheat Coordinator-Uzbekistan, AREA-Yemen.