

*CGIAR Program for Sustainable Agriculture in Central Asia and the Caucasus
(CAC)*

Astana Declaration

The Eleventh Steering Committee meeting of CGIAR Program for Sustainable Agricultural Development in Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC-Program) met in Astana, Kazakhstan, between 21 and 23 June, 2008. The Program is implemented by a Consortium of partners, namely the eight National Agricultural Research Systems of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, eight International Centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) – Bioversity International, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), International Potato Center (CIP), International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), International Center for Water Management (IWMI); two other International Centers – AVRDC - the World Vegetable Center, International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA); and Michigan State University (MSU).

The Program was established in 1998, and the activities of the Program over the last ten years have been positively evaluated by its External Review in 2008. Achievements were made in germplasm improvement, seed supply systems, cropping systems and agricultural diversification, integrated system of livestock and fodder production, integrated on-farm soil, water and salinity management, conservation of plant genetic resources, small ruminants breed characterization, socioeconomic and policy research, capacity development and regional and international cooperation.

During the meeting the participants started working actively on means and ways to implement the recommendations of the Review Panel, principally with regard to further improving the overall integration of all research components of the Program.

The Participants recognize the progress achieved in sustainable agricultural development of the CAC region, and note the need for more to be done, principally in view of globally challenging and pressing problems such as increased food prices, climate change, food insecurity, water scarcity, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, and the urgent need for poverty alleviation and improvement of

livelihoods. The participants support the efforts undertaken by all the Consortium members, including national programs and international agricultural research centers, to coordinate and integrate the Program's activities through the Program's Facilitation Unit (PFU). Based on their comparative advantages and knowledge accumulated thus far, the participants give high priority to approaches that address the above-mentioned problems and challenges through conservation agriculture, integrated land and water management, agricultural water productivity, crop improvement, integrated pest management, diversification of production systems, improved mountain agriculture, integrated livestock/rangeland/crop management, and socio-economic and policy research. They express their commitment to actively work for improving the interaction of the CAC Program with academic, research and development institutions, civil societies and the private sector, which are actively involved in the region to contribute to sustainable agricultural development in the CAC region.

The Meeting Participants agree to jointly develop a fund-raising strategy for the Program activities to seek a wider attraction of financial resources from the international and regional donors. Furthermore, the participants endorse their National Partners' efforts to raise the contribution of the national budgets invested in agricultural research.

The participants welcome and support the intention of the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan to become a member in the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

The participants express appreciation to the Government of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Agriculture for hosting this meeting in Astana and for all the support and hospitality to make this meeting a success.

Astana, Kazakhstan, 23. June 2008