

**6th MEETING OF THE ASIAN COTTON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT NETWORK DHAKA,
BANGLADESH
(June 18-20, 2014)**

**Welcome Address by
Dr. Abid Mahmood, Chairman of the Network
Director General, Ayub Agriculture Research Institute, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan**

Honourable Minister of Agriculture Begam Matia Chowdhury, Dr. S. M. Nazmul Islam (Secretary Agriculture, Government of Bangladesh), Mr. Md. Abdul Latif (Executive Director, Cotton Development Board, Bangladesh), Dr. M. Rafiq Chaudhry (International Cotton Advisory Committee), Mr. Mike Robson (FAO Representative in Bangladesh), Dr. Md. Kamal-ud-Din Chairman BARC Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen
Good Morning, Assalam-o-Alaikum

On the behalf of Asian Cotton Research and Development Network, I as chairman of Asian Cotton Res. and Development Network would like to express my warm welcome to all of you in this meeting. This Network was established in 1999 and since then five meetings of the Network have held in Pakistan (1999), Uzbekistan (2002), India (2005), China (2008) and Pakistan (2011). We are happy to be here in Dhaka in the 6th meeting of this Network. The objectives of the Network are to facilitate communications among cotton researchers in the region, exchange information and find common solutions to the current cotton problems.

Ladies and gentlemen as you can see this Network is expanding and at this time we have delegates from China, Egypt, India, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan and of course Bangladesh. This is one of the biggest meeting where more than 40 delegates from member countries are participating.

Ladies and Gentlemen Asia is the leader in Cotton production as well as in consumption as about $\frac{3}{4}$ of world cotton is in Asia. Therefore there is need to enhance cooperation and collaboration among Asian countries. We should not see each other as competitors but partners. If we produce more we also consume more. Cotton and its value added products of Asia are known for quality all over the world.

Cotton plays significant role for many millions people around the world. The vast majority of people whose livelihood depends on cotton cultivation are located in developing and emerging economies, working on small, predominantly family-based farms. The ICAC has played a vital role in recognizing and addressing the social impacts of cotton cultivation worldwide. They are doing an appreciable job right from advising Governments to bringing together cotton stakeholders. ICAC is also helping cotton researchers in various ways in the region.

Developing countries now play an increasingly greater role in the production, movement and processing of cotton into a finished product. Most of the people sitting here belongs to developing countries, therefore need of communication among cotton researchers is essential than ever before as advancement in research is rapidly taking place and Asian Cotton Res and development Network is the only forum which we can utilize for this purpose.

CABI has supported 3 meetings of this network, in China, Pakistan and this one in Bangladesh. I appreciate their support to bring more people in this meeting. CABI is also helping cotton research especially in IPM. We like to convey our thanks to CABI authorities through Mr. Abdul Rehman for collaboration with the Network and support for this meeting. As chair of the network I see a need of better use of the ACR & D Network forum for the promotion of cotton Research in various fields right from growing of cotton to production of best value added finished products. I will request all researchers to keep in touch with each other after this meeting when you will be in your countries and promote collaborated projects among the countries. We should enhance scientists visits among Network countries for flow of information to solve common cotton problems related to water scarcity, diseases, pests, drought, heat stresses and climate change. Similarly information sharing on ginning and textile sector research is need of the time.

At the end I am again thankful to ICAC, CABI Governments of Network countries, KBF and especially the Govt. of Bangladesh that they provided us the opportunity to collaborate and gather at Dhaka. We must make use of this opportunity and utilize all the time for the purpose of enhancing collaboration and sharing recent knowledge and experiences.