6th Meeting of the Asian Cotton Research and Development Network

Dhaka, Bangladesh

June 18-20, 2014

Implementation Initiatives

1. The cotton leaf curl disease has caused tremendous losses to cotton production in India and Pakistan in the last over two decades. All commercially grown varieties were found to susceptible to the leaf curl virus. Researchers screened the existing germplasm and found only various levels of tolerance but no immunity/resistance. Research done in both countries followed almost the same direction and came up with similar recommendations/conclusion. India and Pakistan will exchange germplasm on equal basis and will volunteer in choosing germplasm.

2. Cotton production in Bangladesh seriously lacks in short duration varieties. India, Pakistan and Uzbekistan will share short duration genotypes with Bangladesh for testing purposes.

3. While the current genetic base of cotton varieties is not wide enough, rather getting narrower, need for exploiting indigenous germplasm particularly *G. arboreum* is very high. India and Pakistan have both enhanced their efforts to utilize non-*hirsutum* cotton genes. India and Pakistan researchers in the relevant disciplines with exchange successes, close to final and published results. Bangladesh will be shared where results could be used for application.

4. There is minimum formal exchange of germplasm among countries in the region. The intended importing country will submit import permit along with description of features required in germplasm line(s) to the country from where the country intend to import seeds. Without permission of the supplying country, the genotype (s) will not be commercialized rather used for breeding purposes only. Germplasm exchange and diversity enhancement is an extremely important component of increasing productivity in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and other countries of the region. The recommendations are in tune with national needs of most countries in the region.

5. India has the most experience in production of commercial cotton hybrids. While a number of other countries have experimented and tried commercial cotton hybrids, Bangladesh is actively considering commercializing biotech cotton by importing hybrids. Participants observed that Bangladesh should have a second look before importing hybrids. Benefits of biotech gene(s) are not argued but change in the production practices has potentially increased varieties' prospects verses F_1 or F_2 hybrids.

6. Uzbekistan has developed mutant lines that have shown a good tolerance to drought conditions compared to commercial varieties. Bangladesh and Uzbekistan will share knowledge and germplasm, if feasible, and enhance cooperation on drought tolerant studies.

7. Cotton production in Bangladesh is far short of the raw material needs of the knitwear and textile industry. Research on cotton production is in the public sector while the consumption is in the private sector. Needs were expressed for the private sector to support production research in Bangladesh.

8. Biosafety regulations introduction and commercial production of biotech cotton are still evolving in countries of the region. There is a need to share experiences and consolidate available information based on the local ecology, cropping diversity and environment. The Asian Cotton Research and Development Network will review and summarize information available in the public sector.

9. The International Cotton Researchers Association (ICRA) is formally operational now. Participants once again emphasized the need to establish an international cotton research institute on the line of CGIAR centers. Executive Committee members of ICRA from the region will propose the issue to the Chairman of the Executive Committee for consideration at a suitable time.

   (www.icracotton.org)