ICARDA was pleased to welcome His Excellency Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Assdullah Zamir, Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, all honorable members from different organizations and community representatives, farmers from different provinces who attended farmer's festival and Spring Ag Fair 20th March 2016 Afghanistan's National Nawrooz celebration, this event organize every year by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) across the country; by conducting Ag-fair at Badam Bagh fairground in Kabul and objective of this event is to increase linkages between Afghan agricultural producers, retailers, and traders, both domestic and international. ICARDA has reserved two booths (#305 and #335). Booth #335 was reserved for all ICARDA’s projects which include CLAP-IFFVC, Forage Research Project, Watershed Project, and Public-Private-Producer-Partnership (PPPP) for Strengthening Seed Certification in Afghanistan. Through this event ICARDA’s presented the different publications these publication could highlight all ICARDA’S activities in the field of agriculture across the projects beside this Five kinds of food which are made through CLAP targeted crops such as chickpea, lentil, bean, potato and onion and 21 kinds of improved seed and new developed varieties were displayed in both booths. the 3D watershed model which developed by technical support of watershed project and Seed Drill Cum-fertilizer from CLAP/IFFVC were displayed at this event as well. President Ghani in his opening speeches in this event said that government is committed to assisting farmers and in line
with this will distribute 40,000 tons of quality improved seed to farmers in the coming year. During this visit Minister of MAIL Assadullah Zamir before president expressed his views and appreciated ICARDA’s activities under different project since its established in Afghanistan and he added in his remarks that CLAP is one of the important projects of MAIL which is implemented and focused on new verities developed and improved quality seed of food and vegetable crops. At the end ICARDA’S staff offered Chickpea Pakaware to President Ghani he ate it and was pleased to visit ICARDA’S booth and wished success to all projects staff.

Cross Learning Tour

Cross learning “a tool for sharing knowledge and experience of stakeholders from different regions” is globally accepted as an efficient method of transferring new skills for development. Considering this principle, ICARDA under its seed certification project facilitates cross learning visits of seed producers, handlers, dealers and quality controllers from different regions of the country. In this series ICARDA facilitated many in-country and out-country cross learning programs. During late April, 2016 this organization facilitated visit of representatives of Privates Seed Enterprises (PSEs), Seed Testing Laboratories (STLs), Seed and Planting Material Certification Directorate (SPCD) and Directorates of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAILs) from Herat, Kabul and Nangarhar provinces to join together in Nangarhar and share their ideas and experiences during practical visits of seed production fields and seed testing and certification facilities. The tour lasted two days during which important research sites, seed production fields, seed processing facilities, seed testing facilities and private seed enterprises were visited by participants. Shisham Bagh Agriculture Research Farm, Seed Testing Laboratory of eastern zone, Soil Testing Laboratory and wheat production fields of Wadan Seed Company were visited during first day of the program. Participants appreciated the work progress on breeder seed of different varieties in shesham Bagh, hard work of seed and soil testing laboratories and excellent field management skills of Wadan Seed Company. During this session Mr. Gul Ahmad Mahmoodzada from Herat shared his experience from Urdokhan Agriculture Research Farm located in Herat province. “It is great pleasure to see that hard work on agricultural research is going on in different parts of the country, Urdokhan farm in Herat is hosting research trails of different legume crops” said Mr. Mahmmodzah. He added that “Herat province has great potential for dryland production and its northwestern hills are unique production sites for rain-fed lentil and chickpea”. Mr. Rashid from SPCD appreciated the work progress of seed testing laboratory and shared his experiences from Central Seed Testing Laboratory with other colleagues. Nangarhar and Pole Behsud Seed Enterprises were visited on second day of the program. During this period the participants visited seed production fields and seed processing facilities of above mentioned companies. Technical staff of companies
ICARDA Under Seed Project - Provides their Stakeholders Different workshops and trainings inside and outside the country, and this Sort of Programs will Help them in future to Positive Changes in the Field of Agricultures of Afghanistan

Importance of Policy Maker Workshop

The participant find it very informative and effective they observed seed production and certification methodology and structures, during this workshop the participants visit different agriculture institution in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab state of India.

Seed Sector Policy Makers Workshop, India

ICARDA under its Seed Certification Project funded by European Union, conducted an extremely important workshop named “Seed Sector Policy Makers Workshop”. Key staff of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan including His Excellency Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Livestock, Honorable Advisor to the President in Agricultural sector, Respected Directors of Seed and Planting Material Certification Directorate (SPCD) and Agriculture Research Institute of Afghanistan (ARIA), President of Afghanistan National Seed Organization (ANSOR), Representative of Private Seed Companies, Representatives of Kabul, Herat and Nangarhar Universities and representatives of farmers participated in this workshop. The workshop was conducted for a period of ten days in India during which several important meetings and visits were conducted. During this program seed sector policy makers from Afghanistan met Indian Minister of Agriculture, Director General of Indian Council for Agriculture Research, Vice Chancellor of Indian Agriculture Research Institute, Director of Plant Genetics and Breeding Center, Director of National Seed Corporation, Director of Plant Quarantine Directorate, Director of Wheat and Barely Research Center, Vice Chancellor of Punjab Agriculture University, Vice Chancellor of Indian National Dairy Research Institute and many other high ranking officers of Indian Government. During this short period the participants had chance to visit Indian Agriculture Festival called “Krishi Mela” where thousands of Indian farmers, seed companies and other companies of agricultural inputs exhibited their products and innovations. The participants visited research stations, laboratories and other facilities of previously named institutes which were located in New Delhi, Karnal and Ludhiana cities of India. Afghan Delegates were warmly welcomed to every institute visited during the program. During this program long discussions between Afghan Delegates and their Indian counterparts were made. The program was evaluated successful and constructive for agriculture sector of Afghanistan as India already completed a long journey in Agriculture Research and Development.
Celebration of International Women's Day

ICARDA’s national and international staffs were present while celebrating the women’s day at Kabul. Dr. Yashpal Sing Saharawat, the country manager of ICARDA Afghanistan appreciated the female staff of ICARDA and emphasized on importance of women’s presence in all aspects of life. This day was also celebrated by directorate of women’s affair in collaboration with ICARDA/CLAP/IFFVC at Parwan Province. Acting governor, Directors of, Woman’s Affair, Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, Culture and Information, Education, Justice, Provincial Council, Peace Council, University Scholars and students, influential people of Parwan and women activists had attended this celebration., Ms. Nadira Giah, Director of Women’s Affair in her speeches thanked to ICARDA for its usual coordination and collaboration. She appreciated ICARDA’s efforts to increase women's participation in agricultural activities. These farmer field school sub-component will be build on their experiences. Through FFSs farmers will take part in the selection of new varieties and their evaluation, development, evaluation of best practices, on-farm evaluation and tastings. FFSs stimulate observation and problem analysis, encourage discussion and sharing of experiences, and facilitate collective decision-making. FFSs approach combines of indigenous and introduced knowledge. This sub-component will also support FFSs exclusively targeting women participants. (CLAP/IFFVC Proposal Based on project documents, three FFSs is planned to be conducted at three targeted districts of Kabul, Logar and Parwan., Two women-based FFSs have been organized at Pul-e-Alam, district of Logar and Qarabagh district of Kabul. 30 female farmers were selected from each province to attend the sessions of the FFSs. The targeted crop of both FFSs is tomato promising line.

Commitment to Paying Women Empowerment in Afghanistan
80 Female-Headed Households Through (FFSs)

Forage Project Research Activities in the Field

Forage Research Project performed the data collection activities, fresh sample weight from demo plots and forage – cereal mixture trials, determined the botanical composition of the mixture trials, prepared Atriplex nursery in the office area of Nangarhar province and transplanted the saplings on 14/4/2016 in Farm-e-Jaded and weeded the forage legume-cereal mixture trials area. They also collected pod bearing data from Vetch and grass pea trials in Farm-i-Jaded. ICARDA Nagarhar conducted one day Farmers Field day to show the trials and observation plots of forages to farmers and other participants to make them aware and familiar to forage project activities and new forages introduced in Afghanistan. The best high yielding nutritious varieties will be released to farmers. As a result the animal health will be improved and the livestock products will be increased and farmer’s food security will be sustained. In Mazar province data collection from forage mixture trial made and data of growth habit, date of 50% flowering, flower color, number of plants in the plots, pod appearance and
number of pods per plant were collected. In Baghlan, 24 new forage seeds were planted in 35 m² in Poza-i-Esham research station, alfalfa – sainfoin demo plots of forage pea and Hungarian vetch with triticale mixture (3 demos) were planted, Berseem mixture with triticale and oat (3 demos). mixture trial, forage pea and Narbon vetch mixture trial were planted. Three demo plots of forage pea and Hungarian vetch with triticale mixture (3 demo plot) were planted in the land of farmers, effect of fertilizer on forage pea, Hungarian vetch and Lathyrus (4 demos) were planted and application of manure and fertilizer on sainfoin, alfalfa, Berseem clover (4 demos) were made. In addition to that, 50 mulberry saplings were also planted in Atriplex nursery area and also nursery of 13 Atriplex species were established.

Watershed management is one of the most important concepts to understand when seeking to improve the quality of our local surface waters. A watershed is a drainage basin in which all land and water areas drain or flow toward a central collector such as a river, stream, lake, or estuary. The flow is propelled simply by land or stream elevation.

ICARDA under Forage Project has different research activities at Farm-e-Jadeed at Nangarhar, at Poza-e-eshan research station, Baghlan Province and in Dehdadi Research station, Balkh province.

Completion of Watershed Sub Projects

Qarasay village is located 50 Km far from center of district pulkhumry, the people living there poor and vulnerable with drought because they don’t have irrigated land and the community rely on rain fed land and livestock. There are some pistachio trees in the mountain of the village. The slope of the area is about more than 20%. In this villages 70 household are living. The main problem there was shortage of water for drinking; there is a spring with weak water sources which community had to bring its water by pipe to avoid the wastage of the water now there is water available only for drinking in the village. Watershed project with aim of support water sources and avoid soil erosion and preparation of land for growing fodder shrubs, some atriplex are cultivated there in semicircle techniques for water harvesting. There is a depth stream excavated by the community In this regard government can support with provision of excavator to avoid the flood destruction in these villages. When the project staff visited there to start project activities the community were not 100% agree to make check dam and spread water in the stream but later on the mission, objectives and expected result of the techniques explained clearly to the community member and hopefully they understood the importance and advantages of the project’s activities, and they said that our effort was appropriated because instead of water spreading we collect waters in a depth stream finally community members agreed to established the waters harvesting techniques in their villages and they promised to support watershed project activities in these districts.
**Water as Infrastructure Assets**

To avoid soil erosion and grow forage for the community livestock more than 300 pit was made in semicircle technique and planted atriplex there in the project site and People of Utran villages of Dara noor district of Nangrahar province were faced with water shortage for irrigation during summer season, they demand to established a pond to collect water during spring and utilize it during shortage of water, ICARDA under watershed project make their dream in reality and constructed a pond for them with capacity of 2000 CuM waters which cultivate about 200 hector land in urban village, Sutan and Mach Gandol are two other villages have their water right in this project, from this project 2000 household from three villages benefited. This project avoids wastage snow melted water as well as rain fall waters, through this project 1000 Man-days household benefited as labor wages and support their livelihood during the harsh winter season.

**Training of Trainers Conducted in Balkh for ACIAR Partners**

Extremely use of underground water cases may cause water level more deeper year by year. Seed production, seed classes and process of seed production was also discussed, seed physical purity and seed germination test and variety maintenance were involved in training session. For extension of agro techniques and introduces new variety demonstration plots concept were presented in which technical expertise were transferred to the trainee and they will transfer it to the farmers. Farmer field school was a method for solving former's problem in participatory manner, through this mechanism farmers can use own experience and new concept by themselves and cross visit shared. Apart from this fodder and forage option, Atriplex varieties were introduced and some seed of atriplex provided to the partner organization to cultivate in their project coverage area along with technical expertise transferred to them. The second and same training for Action Aid Bamyan DAIL staff will be conducted in future.
Women make essential contributions to the agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries. Their roles vary considerably between and within regions and are changing rapidly in many parts of the world, ICARDA strong focuses and emphasis on women empowerment and contribution to Agriculture sector.

23 Women joined ICARDA as Community Based Female Facilitators

ICARDA has a strong commitment for women’s empowerment by their participation in project activities. When women own property and earn money, this may empower them in social and family perspective and will be able to have more power at their homes and in return can help them to reduce their vulnerability to domestic violence. Based on project budget and Gender Responsive Plan, the project has provision to hire 27 community based facilitators (all female) to work on gender streaming under the supervision of the gender specialist and the socio-economist to facilitate female farmers’ participation in project activities at targeted areas. (Gender Responsive Plan- IFFVC-CLAP) After evaluations which were made by the project staff at targeted districts, finally 23 out of 27 women have been employed at Kabul, Logar and Prawn at targeted districts, one person among them identified as team leader and 2 days training has been conducted for them on Kitchen Gardening and Farmer Field School (FFS) and main outline of this training was Importance of women’s participation in agriculture activities.

Women-led Households & Poor Farmers through Kitchen Gardening

Kitchen gardening is one of the rare agricultural activities directed by women and children. However, working across gender barriers is generally not socially acceptable in Afghanistan. Work through local individuals or groups that have already proven trust with the women in the community. ICARDA-CLAP-IFFVC based on its commitment on women empowerment has enlisted the help over of 220 widows and women-led households with close coordination of DAIL, DoWA and CDCs. The kitchen gardens have been established at Charasiab and Dehsabz, districts of Kabul, Mohammad Agha, district of Logar and Charikar, Bagram and Jabalsaraj, districts of Parwan.
One week annual planning held at Delhi to finalize ICARDA-AFG annual planning for all project in Afghanistan, in this meeting experts from headquarter, ICARDA SOUTH ASIA and China office shared their views and suggestion regarding annual planning for the projects.

Special achievement:
Seven trainings with Solidarity of JICA Capacity Development Program Conducted During the Year 2016

1-Seed Production Terbol-Lebanon, twelve persons from SPCD, Mail and PSEs participated in training.

2-Cereal Crop Breeding Trebol-Lebanon, Ten persons from Mail and PSEs participated in training.

3-Extension Contemporary Approaches to extension, Cairo-Egypt, Ten Persons from Stakeholders Participated in this training

4-Seed health testing, Ten Parsons form Mail, SPCD and Labs participated in this training

5-Gene bank and Germplasm-Terbol-Labanon Ten Persons form SPCD, Aria and DAIL participated in this training

6-Seed Processing and storage Terbol-Lebanon, ten person from DAIL, PSEs and labs participated in this training

7-Soil Analysis, Soil Chemistry, Jordan-Amman, Ten persons form DAIL and Aria attended this training.

About ICARDA:
The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) is the global agricultural research organization working with countries in the world’s dry and marginal areas to deliver sustainable systems solutions that increase productivity, improve rural nutrition, and strengthen national food security. ICARDA’s integrated approach includes new crop varieties; agronomy; on-farm water productivity; natural resources management; rangeland and small ruminant production; and socioeconomic and policy research to better target poverty issues and accelerate technology adoption. A member of CGIAR Consortium, ICARDA works closely with national agricultural research programs and other partners in more than 40 countries across North and Sub-Saharan Africa, and Central, South, and West Asia.

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