



Annual Report 2007



SAARC

SAARC Agriculture Centre

Annual Report 2007

SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC)

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Preface

Presenting the Annual Report of the SAARC Agriculture Centre for 2007 is a privilege for me. During the year 2007, the Centre has made a significant progress and successfully implemented its programmes through establishing the spirit of partnership and cooperation with the participating institutes of the SAARC member countries and the Governing Board members.

Workshops and seminars constitute important aspects of awareness creation and knowledge sharing. The Centre arranged a number of seminars during the year that provided the scope for sharing the experiences of the researchers, extension experts, government policy makers and farmers of South Asia to reduce the enormity of the risk factors in agriculture and addressing the emerging issues that are common among the SAARC countries.

The Center always gives emphasis on sharing information with all stakeholders in the agricultural sectors of the SAARC member countries. During 2007, the Centre completed the publication of SAC Newsletter; SAARC Journal of Agriculture; Bulletin of Food Grain Situation in SAARC Countries; News, Views & Ideas; Annual Report 2006; Directory of Ph.D. Dissertations on Agriculture in SAARC Countries, Volume 1, Bangladesh; Crop Varieties in SAARC Countries; Catalogue on Natural Enemies of Insect Pests of Food Crops in SAARC Countries; Handbook on Livestock and Poultry Diseases in SAARC Countries; Statistical Data Book for Agricultural Research and Development in SAARC Countries; Regional Program Development in Agriculture through Consultations. Other publications of the Centre in 2007 were: Bibliography of Periodicals available in the SAARC Agriculture Centre Library; Training Manual and Interactive Multimedia CD ROMs on Presentation Technology.

The Centre released a number of video CDs on practically useful technologies in different SAARC countries for crop, fishery and livestock production. Further work by the Centre for dissemination of knowledge and

information with the help of electronic media is in progress. The Centre developed automated and digital library services for the readers. The website of SAC <http://www.saic-dhaka.org> has been updated within the current programmes with recent information. A new website <http://www.saarcagri.net> was established with the latest information.

Our information resources and databases are open to all agricultural researchers, extension experts, planners, policy makers and agribusiness entrepreneurs especially of the SAARC member countries. All are most welcome to make the best use of these in their efforts to increase agricultural production in the SAARC member countries individually and the SAARC region collectively.

Our sincere thanks and appreciation are extended to all of our colleagues working in different organizations in the SAARC member countries who have continuously contributed to the planning and implementation of the SAC projects and programmes by providing necessary and relevant information. We welcome suggestions from our partners working in the region for our future endeavours.

Dr. Wais Kabir
Director
SAARC Agriculture Centre

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Executive Summary

The SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) has been bringing out a number of important publications on agriculture and allied disciplines for use by agricultural scientists, technologists, researchers and policy makers of the SAARC countries. This Annual Report is a brief account of the programmes and activities of the Centre implemented and conducted during the period January to December 2007.

The Centre has successfully completed the programmes of the year 2007 that were assigned to the Centre by the Governing Board in 2006. An important programme was the organization of seminars to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences among colleagues of the SAARC countries. The main objectives of this programme was to increase awareness among all concerned regarding the existing and future challenges to sustainable agricultural production in the SAARC countries so that timely and appropriate measures can be taken individually and collectively through regional collaborative programmes.

Another important activity of the Centre was the documentation of information on demographic and agricultural statistics and projections, agricultural research, technology generation, etc. related to agricultural production in the SAARC countries. Huge volumes of data and information were organized into several printed and electronic publications, preserved at SAC, circulated to the different SAARC Centres, agricultural research and educational institutions.

Human resource development was an important programme of the Centre in the year under report.

The Centre organised and hosted the following seminars in the year 2007:

Contribution of Rural Development for Sustainable Agriculture

A seminar on "Rural Development for Sustainable Agriculture" on 6 August 2007 at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Dhaka. Dr. Durga P. Paudyal, Director-General, Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), Dhaka, presented the keynote paper.

Prospect of High Value Agriculture in South Asia

BARC and SAC jointly organized a seminar on "Prospect of High Value Agriculture in South Asia" on 7 November 2007 at BARC, Dhaka. Dr. P. K. Joshi, Director, National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research (NCAP), Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), presented the keynote paper.

Biotechnology: A Cutting-Edge Technology for Agricultural Development

This seminar was organized by SAC at BARC Conference Room, Dhaka on 8 December in 2007 in observance of the SAARC Charter Day 2007. Mr. M. Abdul Aziz ndc, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, presented the keynote paper.

Publication

Printed media

During the year 2007, SAC Newsletters Vol. 16 (4) and Vol. 17 (1-2) were published. Also published were the SAARC Journal of Agriculture, Vol. 5 (1-2); Bulletin of Food Grain Situation in SAARC Countries, No. 11, 2006-07; News, Views and Ideas Nos.1 and 2; Annual Report 2006; Directory of Ph.D. Dissertations on Agriculture in SAARC Countries, Volume 1, Bangladesh; Crop Varieties in SAARC Countries; Catalogue on Natural Enemies of Insect Pests of Food Crops in SAARC Countries; Handbook on Livestock and Poultry Diseases in SAARC Countries; Bibliography of Periodicals Available in the SAC Library; SAC Vision 2020; Training Manual and Interactive Multimedia CD ROMs on Presentation Technology; Statistical Data Book for Agricultural Research and Development in SAARC Countries and Regional Program Development in Agriculture through Consultations.

Electronic media

An SAC website, www.saarcagri.net was set up with technical support from the Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC). Relevant SAC staff were trained in website planning, managing and designing. Also, the development of a software, SACLibnet, was completed in December 2007 with technical support from the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. It will be soon linked with the SAC website for online cataloguing service.

In addition, CD-ROM units containing abstracts were developed to cater to requests from a large number of library users from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and other countries requesting. In 2007, abstracts in CD-ROM, numbering 259,701 were supplied to 637 users, compared with 408 during the previous year.

Library

The Centre Library subscribed and procured 517 publications from the SAARC member countries and other international organizations in 2007. These included 297 books, 65 journals, 41 annual reports, 65 newsletters and 49 magazines. The Library is computerised.

Development Programme

Dr. Md. Golam Mostafa, Information Specialist, attended the International Conference on 'Dublin Core and Metadata Applications' in Singapore on 26 August -1 September 2007. He also attended the IASLIC Conference on 'Digital Media and Information Management' at New Delhi, India from 26-28 December 2007.

Mr. Saleemullah Sohoo, Computer Specialist, attended the Fifth International Conference on Information Technology in Asia with the theme "Social Computing: Engaging Communities" at Kuching, Malaysia from 10 -12 July 2007.

Introduction

The SAARC Agriculture Centre

Organization, Mandate and Objectives

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established with the formal adoption of its Charter on December 8, 1985 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, by the leaders of the seven founder member countries, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Afghanistan joined SAARC as the newest member at the Fourteenth SAARC Summit Meeting held in New Delhi in the year 2007. A major objective of **SAARC** is to improve the quality of life of the people of South Asia by accelerating economic growth and facilitating social development in the region. The past two decades have witnessed the evolution of SAARC into a fraternity that promotes joint ventures and regional collaboration. This has created a favourable environment for the achievement of the objectives set forth in the SAARC Charter. .

The SAARC Agriculture Centre (renamed in April 2007 in place of "SAARC Agricultural Information Centre"), located at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) Complex, Dhaka, is the first regional Centre established by SAARC. The Centre started functioning in Dhaka in 1989. Since then, the Centre has been continuing with the work of gathering, preserving and disseminating information related primarily to agricultural research and development.

The organizational setup, mandate, objectives, functions and of the Centre are described in details in the following sections:

Organisational Setup

The Centre functions with the following administrative setup:

The Governing Board

The Governing Board (GB) is the apex body of the Centre. The GB consists of eminent personalities in the field of agricultural research and development and information management from each SAARC member country.

The representatives of the SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the host government, Bangladesh, also attends the GB meeting.

A Chairperson, designated for a two-year term from the member countries by alphabetical rotation, heads the Governing Board. The Standing Committee and Council of Ministers approve the Proceedings of the GB meeting.

It meets at least once in a year, depending on the requirements, during which time it monitors and evaluates the overall operations of SAC. It also approves the annual programmes, recommends the annual budget estimates and provides guidance on policy matters.

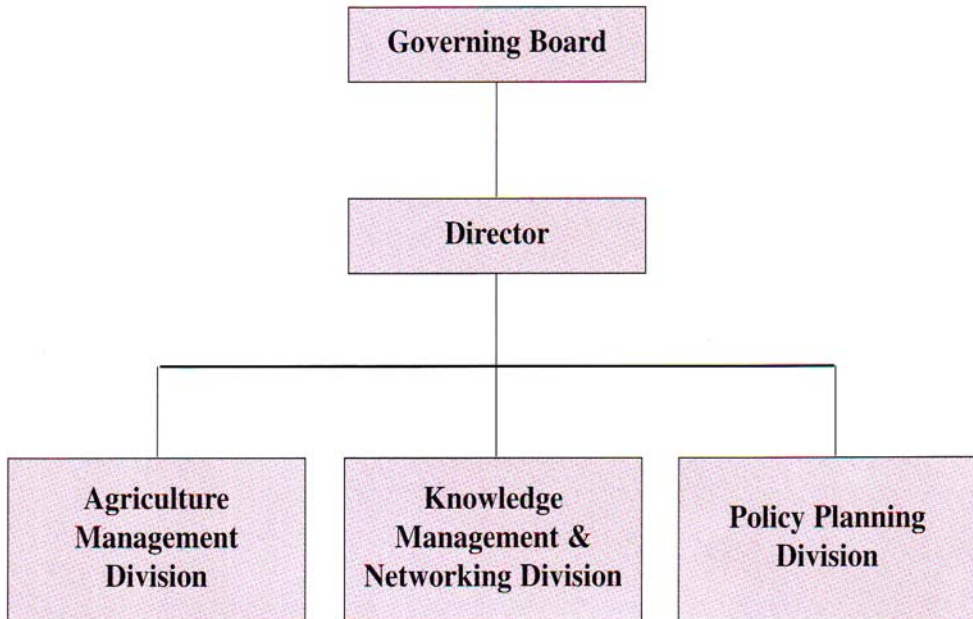
The Director

The Director is the Executive Head of administration, finance, planning and implementation of programme. The Director oversees the functions of the professionals, administration, finance and general service staff. The Director also acts as the Member-Secretary of the Governing Board of SAC.

Professionals and General Service Staff (GSS)

The professionals are recruited from the member countries. The Deputy Directors and Specialists perform the professional duties in their respective fields, particularly in the implementation of programmes. At present, there are 4 professionals working in the Centre. The GSS, appointed from among the nationals of the host country, provide support services in implementing the programmes of the Centre. There are 27 GSS engaged in the Centre.

Functional Organogram



Mandate

The GB recommended the following goal, objectives and functions for the Centre:

Goal

Promotion of agricultural research and development (R&D) as well as technology dissemination for increased and sustainable production and poverty alleviation in the SAARC region.

Objectives

(i) To strengthen agricultural research and accelerate technology transfer through establishing regional networks on agricultural and allied disciplines, particularly among agricultural research and extension centers, professionals, policy advisers and stakeholders.

(ii) To provide inputs for developing regional policies, strategies and programmes, primarily through developing networks in the crop, livestock and fisheries sectors; and for efficient utilization/management of soil, water and other resources.

(iii) To promote new and innovative techniques and systems in agriculture including production, post-harvest and food processing.

(iv) To facilitate collaborative studies, inter alia, on agricultural marketing and distribution systems, harmonization of agricultural related standards, promotion of agricultural trade, food security, risks and disaster management in agriculture.

(v) To facilitate and undertake collaborative capacity building programmes in agriculture and allied sectors with focus on skill development and research in frontier areas.

To collate and disseminate information for agricultural advancement in the region.

Functions

(i) Collect information on current agricultural literature, on-going research and development projects, research and development institutions, education and training opportunities and resource persons in agriculture and allied disciplines from the member countries

- (ii) Select, analyse and process regional agricultural information useful to regional users
- (iii) Provide access to these information for users of the region
- (iv) Produce publications of regional importance on agriculture and allied disciplines
- (v) Provide selective dissemination of information, copies of documents, microfiche and video films generated in the region
- (vi) Organize and provide training on information and communication sciences to the personnel of member countries
- (vii) Function as the regional information centre for South Asia and have access to the international information networks.

Important Programmes and Events During the Year 2007

First Meeting of the Governing Board

The 1st Meeting of the Governing Board (GB) of SAC was held in Dhaka from 04 - 06 November 2007. The following honorable members of the Governing Body attended the Meeting:

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SAARC Agriculture Centre

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Inaugural Function

The Meeting was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Dr. Nurul Alam, Executive Chairman, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council, Ministry of Agriculture and Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Mr. Kazi Intiaz Hossain, Director General (SAARC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was the Special Guest. The High Commissioner of Sri Lanka and other representatives of the High Commissions/ Embassies of the SAARC member states in Dhaka also attended the inaugural as special invitees. The session was presided over by Dr. P. K. Joshi, Director, National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research, Indian Council for Agricultural Research, India and Chairman of the Governing Board of SAARC Agriculture Centre.

In his address of welcome, the Director of the Centre, Dr. Wais Kabir offered warm greetings to the distinguished guests and introduced the GB members. He recalled that the Centre has been renamed as SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) with a new mandate, as agreed by the Meeting of SAARC Agriculture/Food Ministers in December 2006. He stated that the 1st GB had the challenge of refocusing the



Participants of the 1st Governing Board of SAC

1st row (from left) : Dr. Wais Kabir, Dr. P. K. Joshi, Mr. Sufiur Rahman

2nd row (from left) : Mr. M. Riaz Hamidullah, Md. Duad Burhan, Mr. Chhime Tshering, Dr. SK., Ghulam Hussain, Mr. Shiva Sundar Shrestha, Mr. K. N. Mankotte

activities aligning with its new mandate and objectives as well as reassigning the resources. Dr. Kabir said that the Centre would have to strengthen R&D and enhance networking among the national institutions in the field of agriculture.

In his inaugural address, the Chief Guest, Dr. M. Nurul Alam said that the establishment of various SAARC Bodies and Regional Centres like the SAARC

Agriculture in the Member states have greatly broadened the scope of meaningful cooperation at the regional level. He hoped that the Centre with new mandate could facilitate undertaking poverty alleviation initiatives in the region by promoting new technologies and facilitating transfer of technology in the agriculture and allied sectors.

In his address, Mr. Kazi Imtiaz Hossain, highlighted that ensuring food and nutritional security, developing and transferring new technology, and strengthening research-extension-farmer linkage are some of the major challenges for the region. He said that efforts must continue, with a renewed vigour, for vibrant rural agriculture and economy for the sustainable development. He emphasised that decline of land availability and biodiversity, degradation of soil and natural resources, losing ground water level are some of serious challenges in the region.

Dr. P. K. Joshi observed that poverty, food shortage and malnutrition still afflict the region. He enumerated some of the challenges that South Asian agriculture is now faced with to enhance productivity and efficiency. The Centre should endeavour to provide inputs and engage in policy advocacy through its programmes, he added.

Mr. Md. Sufiur Rahman, Director, SAARC Secretariat, conveyed the greetings of His Excellency the Secretary General of the SAARC. He briefed the Meeting of the mentionable programmes and projects that are being pursued and development in the field of agriculture. He particularly underlined the need for reorientation of the focus of the programmes of the centre to realise the newly defined mandate. He underscored that the Centre must play its due role in contributing to setting the agriculture agenda of SAARC, and implementing decisions taken at higher SAARC bodies.

The GB Business Meeting: Observation and Major Decisions

Dr. Wais Kabir, Director, SAC and Member-Secretary of the GB presented his report to the meeting. The report included a review of the past few years up to the present. The GB thanked the Director with appreciation for his report. The GB felt that SAC should explore the possibilities of establishing institutional linkages with the centres of excellence in the region, which have focus on technology dissemination.

1. The GB made the following specific observations:

a. The Centre may consider producing material in electronic form, preferably posting in the Centre's website, converting in CD-ROM - in addition to printed documents - with a view to reducing the cost of publication and postage.

b. The Centre should analyse the prevailing scenario and make projections while publishing the Bulletin on Food Grain situation in SAARC countries.

c. As regards the composition of the Editorial Board of the SAARC Journal on Agriculture (SJA), it was agreed that eminent professionals from South Asian countries would be inducted. In addition, at least two eminent professionals of South Asian origin, from beyond the region, may also be included.

d. Regarding Regional Workshop on the Role of Media in Accelerating Agricultural Growth, the GB advised the Director to remain engaged with the designated Institution in Pakistan. In case of difficulties, the GB authorised the Director to take appropriate measures (including change of venue) after consulting the GB Member from Pakistan.

e. While preparing the budget proposals in future, activity-wise actual expenditure till the previous month should be submitted.

f. The proposed theme "Strategies for arresting Soil Degradation and Conversion of Agricultural Land for non-agriculture use" was changed to "Strategies for arresting Land Degradation in South Asian countries". However it was observed the issues related to land use planning may be taken up at a later stage.

2. On the new Programme for 2008 on "Seed in SAARC Countries: Production, Processing, Storage, Quality Assurance and Marketing", it was agreed that its objectives should *inter alia* include assessment of regulatory measures,

potential for collaboration on IPR issues among SAARC countries and the possibility of harmonizing regional approaches. In this regard, possible sub-regional and regional projects, in addition to recommending policy inputs, may also be explored. The Study would be a two-year programme with regional synthesis of national inputs to be undertaken in the year 2009 through a regional workshop.

3. Regarding the workshop on "Farm Mechanization for Smallholder Agriculture in SAARC Countries", the exact title may be finalized to capture the relevant issues.

4. The GB appreciated very useful publications provided by the GB members to the Centre. The meeting encouraged the GB members to continue sending new publications related to agriculture being published in the country to the Centre for advancing its mandate.

5. In order to established networks, the Centre could start with Institutions in the region and national nodal agencies related to the priority themes. In this regard, the Centre should initiate networking with the institutions in the member states on thematic areas e.g. Research-Extension-Farmer linkages, Livestock. Accordingly a new program has been agreed upon for 2008.

6. On networking with other SAARC Regional Centres, the GB authorised the Director to consult the Director of SMRC to develop a Concept Paper on a collaborative programme involving the two Centres. It would be circulated to the GB Members within the next three months. The Paper would be enriched and modified, based on the inputs/guidance received from the GB Members. The activity would then be undertaken, once endorsement is received from the Chair of the SAC Governing Board.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka may coordinate with SAC and SAARC Meteorological Research Centre (SMRC), both situated in Dhaka, and explore how to collaborate on a well-coordinated and organised programme for the SAARC Charter Day.

The GB recommended that Director, SAC might summarize past and ongoing programmes country-wise and request the members for facilitating the activities. Director, SAC, may send a communication to the respective Foreign/External Affairs Ministry, which may in turn request the concerned Ministry to facilitate the work of the GB members related to SAC activities.

New GB Members Nominated

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Consultative Meeting

A consultative meeting on **Roles of Media for Accelerating Agricultural Growth in SAARC Countries: Experiences and Lessons from South Asia.**

This was held on May 12, 2007 in the Centre Conference Room. The objective of the meeting was to develop a future programme of activities of the Centre to strengthen research-extension-farmer linkage. Several media representatives were present at the meeting.

The first Meeting of the Inter-Governmental Core Group (IGCG) was held in Dhaka at BARC Conference Room, Farmgate on November 11-12, 2007. The objective of the Inter-Governmental Core Group are:

- To examine the existing policy approaches and institutional arrangements, status of development, and the current level and extent of cooperation on agricultural research and extension in SAARC countries.
- To identify, and seek to bridge knowledge and technology gaps among research, extension and farm levels, facilitate transfer of proven technologies and test validate potential technologies.
- Conduct collaborative studies and technical dialogue with a view to providing inputs for developing regional policies, strategies and programmes and to suggesting policy options.
- Explore possible areas of SAARC Inter-governmental cooperation for the identification and implementation of appropriate projects to accelerate agricultural growth in the SAARC region.

Observation of SAARC Charter Day 2007

In observance of the SAARC Charter Day 2007, SAC organized a Seminar on 'Biotechnology: A Cutting-Edge Technology for Agricultural Development' on 8 December, 2007 at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) Conference Room, Dhaka. Mr. M. Abdul Aziz ndc, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, presented the keynote paper on the occasion.



From right : Dr. Wais Kabir, Dr. M. Nurul Alam, Mr. M. Abdul Aziz ndc,
Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque

Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque, Member-Director (Crop), BARC and Professor Dr. M. A. Khaleque, Department of Genetics & Plant Breeding, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahamn Agricultural University (BSMRAU), Gazipur was present on the occasion as the discussants. Dr. M. Nurul Alam, Executive Chairman of BARC chaired the seminar.

In his paper Mr. M. Abdul Aziz ndc mentioned that agriculture, the fundamental base of livelihood and economy of the country, has made significant progress since independence, increasing food grain production by three folds which has been instrumental in reducing the levels of food insecurity and poverty. Agricultural sector contributes to the nation's GDP by about 23% supporting about 140 million people and providing employment to about 53% of its work force. Although Bangladesh has attained remarkable progress towards self-sufficient in food in terms of quality requirement, still there deficiencies in nutritional requirements.

Despite some output gains the sector is increasingly being challenged by shrinking production resources, especially arable land and genetic resources. The biotic and abiotic stresses, as well as natural disasters have intensified. Other challenges are extremely low land/ man ratio,

preponderance of landless, marginal and small farmers, low yield and productivity of most crops, and poor agroprocessing and value addition. In the year ahead, agriculture will be required to produce a more diversified food basket with greater shares of meat, fish, milk, fruits and vegetables. Biotechnology in this context becomes eminently relevant that deals with modern plant and animal breeding and application of bioscience precisely for specific purposes. Its potentially includes producing new quick growing crop varieties with preferred characteristics and amazingly high productivity.

There were more than 100 participants of the seminar from BARC, AIC, AIS, BJRI, DLS, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture and Extension, BARI, BRRI, SMRC, BADC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hortex Foundation, BRAG University, CPD, CIRDAP, NGOs, Print and Electronic Media, and representatives of the High Commissions/ Embassies of the SAARC member states in Dhaka.

Seminars

The Centre organized the following seminars during the year 2007 with a view to facilitating exchange of ideas and sharing of knowledge.

(i) Water Saving Technology for Rice Production

This was held on 15 May 2007 at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) Conference Room. Dr. To Phuc Tuong, Head, Crop and Environmental Sciences Division, International Rice Research Institute, Philippine presented the paper in the seminar. Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque, Member-Director (Crop), BARC presided over the seminar.

Dr. Tuong stated in his paper about water scarcity, water use and water productivity (WP) in rice production, framework and principles for water saving and WPenhancing technologies. He also described the technologies at plant and field scales, discussed trade-off and challenges of the technologies. He emphasized on alternative wetting & drying (AWD) technology in saving water for irrigated rice culture.

More than 70 participants attended the seminar from BARC, AIC, AIS, BJRI, Department of Agriculture and Extension, BARI, BRRI, BADC, BIDS, Hortex Foundation, CPD, NGOs, Print and Electronic Media.

(ii) Rural Development for Sustainable Agriculture

The seminar was held on 6 August 2007 at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) Conference Room. Dr. Durga P. Paudyal,

Director-General, Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), Dhaka, presented the paper in the seminar.

Dr. Paudyal mentioned that sustainable development is all about conserving and managing the natural resource base, in consonance with technological and institutional changes taking place over time, so as to ensure fulfilling human needs of present and future generations. In agriculture it means conserving water, land plant, animal and genetic resources and is environmentally non-degrading, technically appropriate, economically viable and socially acceptable.

On the other hand, rural development, in its broader sense, implies many primary, supplementary and complementary activities such as improving the food production systems, sustaining natural resources, consolidating economic growth, obtaining equity, improving rural infrastructure, skills and activities, in a territorial, multi-sectoral, social and economic and human development spheres. Thus rural development is much larger in scope and content relative to agricultural development. It also recognizes various options to reduce poverty like promotion of various farms, non farm and off farm activities, creation of social networks, and placing policies right.

However, the reality of the day is that market-led-globalization has already taken agriculture sector under its commercial influence. Some have argued that agriculture sector, which is still the major employment provider, main contributor to the GDP and main export earner in many bypass the small and marginal farmers, who constitute more than 80 percent of the farm activity in Asia. Indeed, in the existing skewed distribution of productive resources, the main beneficiaries of the agricultural development policies might have been mainly the large landowners, leading to growing income gap between the rich and the poor.

More than 90 participants attended the seminar from BARC, AIC, AIS, BJRI, DLS, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture and Extension, BARI, BRRI, SMRC, BADC, BIDS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hortex Foundation, BRAC, CPD, CIRDAP, NGOs, Print and Electronic Media, and representatives of the High Commissions/ Embassies of the SAARC member states in Dhaka.

(iii) Prospect of High Value Agriculture in South Asia

This was held on 7 November 2007 at the BARC Conference Room. SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) jointly organized the seminar. Dr. P. K. Joshi, Director, National Center for

Agricultural Economics & Policy Research (NCAP), ICAR, India, presented the paper in the seminar.

Dr. P. K. Joshi stated in his paper that economic growth is increasing in South Asia but this is insufficient to keep pace with the population growth rate. On the other hand, the share of agricultural to the national GDPs is decreasing although human dependence on agriculture keeps increasing.



From right : Dr. P. K. Joshi, Dr. M. Nurul Alam, Dr. Wais Kabir, Dr. S M Khalilur Rahman

Dr. Joshi commented that the population of South Asia will increase to 1.7 billion in 2015 and put forward a very important question: Who will feed the rising population? He further stated that shrinking size of land holdings, increasing scarcity of irrigation water, deteriorating soil health, erratic climate changes, etc.

will adversely affect agricultural production.

There were more than 80 participants attended of the seminar from BARC, AIC, AIS, BJRI, DLS, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture and Extension, BARI, BIRRI, SMRC, BADC, BIDS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hortex Foundation, BRAC, CPD, CIRDAP, NGOs, Print and Electronic Media, and representatives of the High Commissions/ Embassies of the SAARC member states in Dhaka.

Dissemination of Knowledge: Programmes and Initiatives

Publications

The SAARC Agriculture Centre has been bringing out publications on agriculture and allied disciplines and circulating these to agricultural scientists, technologists, researchers and the policy makers. Two categories of publications are there:

Regular publications:

(i) Newsletter (New Name SAARC Agrinews) (ii) SAARC News, Views & Ideas (Newspapers Articles), (iii) Foodgrain Situation, (vi) Statistical Bulletin (renamed as Statistical data Book for Agricultural Research) (v) Journal and (vi) Annual Report.

Occasional publications:

(i) Technical Publications, (ii) Directories, (iii) Bibliographies, (iv) Databases, (v) Union Catalogue, and (vi) Workshop Proceedings.

Publications During 2007

The following publications have been brought out during 2007:

i) SAARC Journal of Agriculture: Vol. 5, No. 1 & 2, 2007

The Centre has been publishing the SAARC Journal of Agriculture (SJA) since 2003. The SJA contains scientific papers of original research and review articles in the field of agriculture and allied disciplines from the member countries. Issue nos. 1 and 2 of Vol. 5 of SJA contain 14 and 11 research articles, respectively, in the fields of agriculture and allied disciplines. Now-a-days, SJA is considered as an important tool for exchange of contemporary scientific knowledge.

(ii) SAIC Newsletter (New Name SAARC Agrinews)

SAIL has been regularly publishing the quarterly SAIL Newsletter. It contains information on technologies generated in the fields of crops, fisheries, forestry, livestock, [etc. in](#) different SAARC member countries. The SAIC Newsletter Vol. 16, No. 4 and Vol. 17: No 1- 2 were published and distributed among the readers in the region during the period.

iii) SAARC News, Views & Ideas (compilation of Newspaper articles)

This is a compilation of articles from leading daily newspapers from the SAARC countries. This compilation includes articles on agricultural technologies generated by different research institutes and universities related to crops, livestock, poultry, fisheries, etc. During 2007, the Centre published 2 issues of SAARC News, Views and Ideas and distributed these to selected groups of readers.

Reliable information and data are a critical prerequisite for any planning, policy formulation and decision making. The Centre has been updating and compiling data in agriculture and related fields and publishing annually with the title "Statistical Bulletin of SAARC Agricultural Data" since 2002. The publication led the Centre to look for up-to-date information from different sources of the member countries of the SAARC. In doing so, it was felt that, there is a need to widen the data coverage to make the publication more relevant and useful to its users. Starting in year 2007, this publication bears the title "Statistical Data book for National Agricultural Research System in Bangladesh - a historical perspective

(iv) Statistical Data Book for Agricultural Research SAARC Countries and Development in SAARC Countries

Reliable information and data are a critical prerequisite for any planning, policy formulation and decision making. The Centre has been updating and compiling data in agriculture and related fields and publishing annually with the title "Statistical Bulletin of SAARC Agricultural Data" since 2002. The publication led the Centre to look for up-to-date information from different sources of the member countries of the SAARC. In doing so, it was felt that, there is a need to widen the data coverage to make the publication more relevant and useful to its users. Starting in year 2007, this publication bears the title "Statistical Data Book for Agricultural Research and Development in SAARC Countries" containing a broader range of information and relevant data.

The book is divided into chapters based on country data like Population and Natural Resources, Key Economic Indicators, Production and Productivity of Agricultural Crops, Horticulture, Livestock, Fisheries, Forestry, Inputs and Credit, Produce Management, Exports and Import of Agricultural Commodities and Agricultural Research and Development Capacity. It is hoped that the information in this book would help the users in the analysis of demographic trends, natural resources, agricultural productivity and production situations, incidence of poverty, income generation, etc. This will lead to the better planning of agricultural R&D initiatives and appropriate national and regional policy support for programme implementation.

(v) Bulletin of Food Grain Situation in SAARC Countries

The publication 'Bulletin of Food Grain Situation in SAARC Countries' provides information on major food grains in the SAARC member countries, including production, anticipated demands, likely shortfalls, surplus, etc. The information will be useful for planning strategies for achieving food security nationally and regionally.

(vi) Directory of Ph.D. Dissertations on Agriculture in SAARC Countries

The SAARC Agriculture Centre serves to network among agriculture institutions of the Member States with a view to strengthening agricultural research and development programmes in the region. Students of the many universities and colleges of the SAARC countries are carrying out very useful basic and applied research for their degree programmes. The Centre took an initiative to document these research outputs/ information/innovations from the educational institutions of the SAARC countries. Through networking with the various universities offering advanced degrees, the Centre has started compiling a directory of dissertations. In this connection, the Centre has been receiving huge volumes of abstracts of Ph.D. dissertations from agricultural universities of the SAARC Countries. The first such directory, namely, "Directory of Ph.D. Dissertations on Agriculture in SAARC Countries 2000-2006, Vol I Bangladesh Chapter" has been published in 2007.

(vii) Crop Varieties in SAARC Countries

The publication is the output of in-house desk study with the information available at the Centre level. This book is an important document of crops. It provides information on cereal, pulse, oilseed, vegetable, sugar, fibres, forage and beverages crops. The crop characteristics, including pedigrees, growing seasons, crop durations, yield, pest incidences, etc. are described in the document. It is expected that the details of the varieties would be useful to the professionals who are involved in crop improvement, seed production, policy formulating and extension activities. The document may support future agricultural development programme like exchanging germplasm, facilitating the adoption of suitable varieties and production technologies the SAARC member countries. The information was collected from various research organizations, reports, data books, leaflets, etc.

(viii) Catalogue of Natural Enemies of Insect Pests of Food Crops in SAARC Countries

Farmers in SAARC region rely, often indiscriminately, on chemical pesticides for pest control. Improper and excess use of pesticides is a common problem in the SAARC countries. The practice increases

the cost of production and leads to environmental pollution. An appropriate alternative is integrated pest management (IPM) which integrates cultural practices, use of natural enemies of pests with substantially reduced use of pesticides if at all needed. A knowledge of indigenous natural enemies of insects helps pest control biologically through parasitoids and predators. However, both at the researcher and farmer levels, such information is scarce. The calls for extensive research on indigenous natural enemies of the insects-pests and dissemination of knowledge to the farmers for the practice of IPM. The Centre compiled and documented information in this respect and released the document for the benefit of researchers and extension experts and ultimately farmers.

(ix) Handbook on Livestock and Poultry Diseases in SAARC Countries.

Livestock and poultry have been playing a vital role in agricultural development in the SAARC countries. The sector plays an important role in the economy contributing to income generation and poverty alleviation. Large numbers of people are increasingly dependent on livestock for their livelihood in the rural areas. Localized, intra-country and transboundary disease outbreaks/epidemics often adversely affect livestock decreasing reproduction and degrading the quantity and quality of meat, milk, hide which reduces the farmers' incomes.

Livestock and poultry disease management and trade of animal and animal products have been recognized as an important agenda for SAARC regional cooperation. Knowledge of animal diseases enhances the capacity for animal health surveillance, diagnostics, standards setting, etc. and to help SAARC countries in their efforts to control trans-boundary animal diseases. Recently, epidemics of some diseases have affected the economies of SAARC countries and resulted in huge losses at the farmers' levels. The Centre has initiated a programme of compiling local information available in member countries on diseases of livestock and poultry. This handbook contains information on diseases, their symptoms, possible treatments and effect on human health. It is hoped that it will be useful for scientists, extension service providers, veterinary students.

(x) Bibliography of Periodicals Available in SAARC Agriculture Centre Library

The Centre serves the SAARC member countries with agricultural information to strengthen agricultural research and development in the region. The Centre collects, processes information to send out to an ever increasing number of users. In conformity with this objective, the Center prepared a bibliography of

journals and periodicals available in its Library. This bibliography has on its roll 317 titles of journal and periodicals on agricultural and allied subjects.

(xi) Training Manual and Interactive Multimedia CD ROMs on Presentation Technology

The performance of farmers in agricultural productivity is known to be directly related to the level and quality of training provided to agricultural extension workers. Extension workers often need formal training in communication skills to make their efforts successful. It is not sufficient for an extension worker to have only technical knowledge and skills, he/she should be able to communicate effectively to the farmers with communication skill.

The presentation materials required in communication include a wide spectrum of instructional media, from low-cost locally available media to high-tech media. The use of these media depends on situations and facilities available.

Central to effective communication is the choice and/or use of the right type of presentation materials, methods and styles based on situations. This publication will be an aid to in-service and pre-service training in agricultural extension and a help in sharing information among stakeholders in SAARC countries.

(xii) Regional Programme Development in Agriculture through Consultations

Development of appropriate programmes reflecting the requirements and aspirations of the stakeholders is a prime task of the Centre in the face of the challenges of environmental protection and resource conservation, the challenges of food security and poverty eradication and the new challenges posed by liberalization of global trade emanating from the world trade Organization (WTO). Receiving useful views and ideas from the stakeholders and synthesizing those into regional programmes at the proper time is critical. The need for a programme building process has been increasingly and strongly felt. The Centre initiated consultation among the stakeholders including scientists and policy makers to develop programmes for the Centre on medium- to long-terms basis. The outputs of the consultations in the individual countries were further synthesized at the Centre to develop a common format for programme proposals.

The document has been prepared from the outputs of stakeholders' meetings on programme building in different SAARC countries and outcomes of meetings/consultations under the aegis of SAARC, like the Inter-Governmental

Core Group on Agricultural Research and Extension, Technical Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (TCARD). The programme proposals made by the Inter-Governmental Core Group showed a striking similarity with the proposals made by the stakeholders' meetings in different member countries.

(xiii) Annual Report 2006

The first issue of the Annual Report was published in November 1994 and since then it has been published regularly every year. The report includes information about SAIL objectives, major functions, and completed activities and programmes. The latest Annual Report was published during 2007.

Library

The SAARC Agriculture Centre maintains a Library with books, periodicals and electronic information materials especially related to agricultural sciences for users from of Bangladesh and other countries of the SAARC region and beyond. The Library has more than 3000 volumes of books and 600 periodicals of 350 titles, annual reports and daily newspapers. In 2007, the Library has introduced Digital Audio Visual Service containing number of digital video CDs on agriculture. The Library is automated. A computer based Bibliographic Database of all books, journals/proceedings, reports and Ph.D. Dissertations is available in the Library. The database has been developed through a customized Software and this service is available at the Centre website (Visit www.saarcagri.net).

Library Service: Presently the Centre Library renders the following information services to its in-house and institutional users:

Print and Electronic Material

Books (Local and foreign); Journals (Local and foreign); Magazines (Local and foreign); Newspapers (Local and foreign); Reference Service; CD-ROM search service

Bibliographical Services: A Bibliographic Database of all journals available in SAC Library has been prepared in printed format and it is distributed among the relevant institutions in the SAARC member countries.

Current Awareness Services (CAS): The Centre is publishing News, Views and Ideas (newspaper articles), providing to 100 R&D organizations of the SAARC countries. Updated information on books, journals, proceedings, report and monographs is available in every quarter of the year.

Photocopy Services: Provided for necessary pages of Library information as per user's requirements.

Digital Audio Visual Services: The Centre Library is providing some selected digital audio-visual service for the users.

New Arrivals in the Library

In 2007, the Centre Library subscribed and procured 517 publications from SAARC member countries and other international organizations. Among the

publications, there were 297 books, 65 journals, 41 Annual reports, 65 Newsletters and 49 magazines as shown in the table below.

Table: New arrivals in the SAC Library

Country	Books	Journals	Annual Reports	Newsletters	Newspapers/ Magazines	Total
Bangladesh	60	14	12	12	20	118
Bhutan		5		2	5	12
India	105	25	18	25	8	181
Maldives				3	-	3
Nepal	10	2	1	4	2	19
Pakistan	5	5	2	5	5	22
Sri Lanka	2	4	3	4	4	17
Others	105	10	5	10	5	135
Total	297	65	41	65	49	517

Knowledge Transfer through Electronic Media

The Centre has a Video Lab for providing digital information and literature support to researchers, professionals, teachers, and students from different institutions of the region. The Video Lab has a collection of video CDs about agricultural technologies and application of technologies. The Video Lab has 214 video films which were produced, dubbed and collected from the SAARC member countries are as follows:

Audio Visual Production by the Centre	Audio Visual Dubbing by the Centre	Audio Visual Collection from SAARC Member Countries
23	10	181

Audio Visual Collection from SAARC Member Countries are follows:

Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	NGOs	Total
48	8	27	10	49	29	10	181

Present activities of Audiovisual Production and Reproduction Division are as follows:

Production of Videos

The Centre facilitated in the production of the following video films during 2007 which are available for the users.

(i) Kithul Palm Tree in Sri Lanka (28 min.)

The programme was implemented by the Audio Visual Centre, Department of Agriculture, Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Centre in 2007. Kithul (*Caryota Urens*) is a native tree, popular among the rural community of Sri Lanka. The video demonstrates Kithul production, sap collection, processing and marketing (local and abroad) and its multiple uses. Treacle and Jaggery are the main products from Kithul sap. Treacle is mixed with coconut and used as a substitute of sugar to sweeten tea. Besides, it has also medicinal values and multiple uses. Different types of ornamental products, handicrafts, walking sticks are made of Kithul timber.

(ii) Floriculture and its Prospects in India (28 min.)

The programme was implemented by the Indian Institute of Horticulture Research, Bangalore in collaboration with the Centre. The video describes the cultivation of flowers, harvesting, grading, processing, packaging and transporting to the local and foreign markets. It also highlights future prospects of various cut flowers, dry flowers and foliage in India.

(iii) Mango Production and Post-harvest Management in Pakistan (27 min.)

The programme was implemented by the Directorate of Agricultural Information, Panjab, Lahore, Pakistan in collaboration with the Centre. The video contains information on different varieties of mango, nursery management, mango production practices, grafting techniques, disease control, post-harvest handling such as grading, sorting, processing, packaging and transporting including air cooling system. Different grafting techniques such as T-grafting, veneer grafting, Cleft grafting etc are highlighted.

(iv) Dairy Development in SAARC Countries: Success Stories

Major milk producing countries like India, Pakistan and Nepal are working on the programme. Hope, the programme will be completed by 2008.

(vi) Community Based Mushroom Production in Bhutan

This video discusses the latest achievement and on going programmes of mushroom production in Bhutan. Sharing the ^{experience} of Bhutan would help other SAARC countries to develop their mushroom production. The programme is expected to be completed by 2008.

(vii) Evaluation of SAC Video Films and Suggestions for Future Improvement to Reach the Appropriate Audience

The Centre distributes agricultural video-films among relevant institutes in the SAARC member countries. The technical quality of the videos has to be evaluated. The Centre has appointed an expert to evaluate its video programme to improve the video-films.

Reproduction of Audio Visual Materials

During the year 2007, the Centre distributed the following CDs to the SAARC Member Countries:

Item	No. of VCD copies
(i) Black Bengal Goat in Bangladesh	40
(ii) Current Practice of Sericulture in Bangladesh	45
(iii) Apple Cultivation in Nepal	38
(iv) Integrated Pest Management in Sri Lanka	44
(v) Ornamental Fish Breeding and culture in India	50
(vi) Kithul Palm Tree in Sri Lanka	45
(vii) Video Film on Phazhing in Bhutan	40

Video Telecast on TV

The Centre has taken initiative to telecast the following videos through different TV channels of Bangladesh:

- (i) Bamboo and its Propagation in Bangladesh
- (ii) Jack Fruit in Sri Lanka
- (iii) Women in Fisheries
- (iv) Voice of Rural Women in Bangladesh (v) Citrus Growing in Eastern Bhutan (vi) NRTI Participation in the Laya Yak (vii) Dairy Farming in Bhutan
- (viii) Nursery Industry (Documentary on Nursery Programme)
- (ix) Water Works in India
- (x) Neem in Insect Control
- (xi) Tree for Beautification in India
- (xii) Potato Production from Seed in Nepal
- (xiii) Introduction of Livestock Production Research Institute Pakistan
- (xiv) Buffalo Management in Pakistan
- (xv) Conservation Agriculture For Food Security
- (xvi) Bee Keeping in Sri Lanka

Computer Mediated Communication

The Computer Division renders support services by maintaining the server and Internet connectivity, updating the website (www.saarcagri.net), system analysis, data design and programming. The Computer Division procures and updates CD-ROM databases and provides the Agricultural Bibliography Information Services (ABIS) through e-mail. The present activities of Computer Division are as follows:

CD-ROM Publishing and Acquisition

During the year, the Centre updated CD-ROM databases like, Forestry Science Database, Plant Genetic and Breeding Database, Veterinary Science Database, Horticulture Science Database to enhance information resources of the Centre and extended CD-ROM Search Services through e-mail in the form of bibliographic records to researchers of the SAARC region. Available CDs are follows:

CD-ROM Search Services

Title of CD	No. of Copies
1. AGRICOLA (1970-2007)	61
2. BEAST CD (1973-1999)	6
3. BIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS (1995-97)	7
4. CAB ABSTRACTS (1990-2006)	61
5. CROP CD (1993-2007)	9
6. FSTA (1990-2006)	44
7. HORTICULTURE CD (1973-2007)	10
8. PARASITE CD (1973-2003)	8
9. PARASITOLOGY (1972-2006)	7
10. PLANT GENETICS & BREEDING (1993-2007)	11
11. PLANTGENE CD (1973-2007)	11

12. SOIL CD (1973-2007)	9
13. TREE CD (1939-2008)	9
14. VET CD (1973-2007)	11
15. FOREST SCIENCE CD (2000-2008)	7
16. TEEAL CD (1993-2006)	1

In 2007, a total of 637 requests were received from users in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and others countries. In response, the Centre sent out 259,701 abstracts through e-mail as follows:

S. No.	Country	Beneficiaries	No. of abstracts sent
1	Bangladesh	520	39,557
2	India	73	18,453
	Pakistan	38	45,952
4	Others	6	239
	Total	637	259,701

The centre has taken an initiative to expand the CD-ROM search service to the users of the SAARC member countries.

Networking and Internet Connectivity

The Centre has established a Local Area Network (LAN) with 40 nodes running with the Windows 2003 Server Software and 20 PCs have been connected with the Server at SAC. The Centre is also connected to the rest of the world with the establishment of the Internet connectivity with a 128/128 kbps duplex and a fully dedicated radio link. The Internet connectivity is established through the Non-Line-of-Sight (NLOS) method Linux Server gateway. This will assist the Centre to access the internet and distribute information to the users among the member countries. After establishing the internet connectivity, actions have been taken to maintain the linkages for faster correspondence to and from SAC.

The Centre is maintaining a space of 2 GB in the server for enriching the site through uploading with more useful information appropriate for the users of the SAARC region.

Web Publishing, Updating and Attending E-mail:

The website of SAC, <http://www.saarcagri.net> has been updated with the new programme the Centre and other relevant information resources. Since January 2007, more than 10,000 people have visited the website and the number of visitors is increasing steadily.

Procurement of Computer Hardware/Accessories/Stationery

During the year 2007, the Centre procured computer accessories and also procured Acrobat Reader and Antivirus Software for its computers. Softwares like the Window XP 2005, Office 2005, and Photoshop CS were installed in all computers and have them configured to the server computer. Each computer is also now supported with HP laser and dot matrix printer. The Computer Division is fully upgraded with networking and is able to share information with research centres, universities, international organizations and other relevant organizations of SAARC.

SAARC AgriNet Project

The term "SAARC AgriNet Project" is used to denote the Regional Agricultural Information Network of SAC to realize an important objective of the Centre, i.e., establishing regional information network on agricultural sciences, technologies and application of knowledge allied disciplines.' The SAARC AgriNet is an interconnected network of individuals, institutions and other important information resources in the field of Agricultural Research Development and Extension (ARDE) in SAARC member countries. The degree of interconnection is highly dependent on the technology used, which is, in turn, determined by commonalties of service, governance, geography or a combination thereof. The nature of access to a content is dependent on the nature of the content, level of its use, delivery format and the intended audience. SAARC AgriNet seeks to provide access to the network and content for users based on information needs. Thereby, SAARC AgriNet enhances the existing agricultural knowledge and information systems of SAARC member countries and provides a platform to exchange ideas, information and knowledge. In summary, SAARC AgriNet helps the agricultural community of SAARC member countries move closer to realizing a better life through agricultural development.

The SAARC AgriNet website is the key interface for establishing the regional agricultural information network of SAARC. It would provide scope for direct interactions with clients through options on information sharing of institutions, discussion forum and updating information on technological advances and issues on key agenda in the field of agriculture, livestock, natural resources, research, development, etc. The SAARC AgriNet is an interactive website with dynamic features and programmes to provide the latest content and information. Most of the dynamic information services are based on the databases. Appropriate search forms and input forms are created to retrieve and update the databases.

Lately, a collaborative initiative has been taken with the Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) to provide technical support in designing and finalising the SAARC AgriNet website. Some of the outputs of this collaboration were planning, managing and designing of SAARC AgriNet website. Training of SAC staff was also organized as a part of this initiative.

Human Resources Development Programme

In 2004, SAC introduced a human resource development (HRD) programme through the establishment of institutional linkages. Under this programme, the following professionals attended the seminars/ workshops/ conferences mentioned below:

Participation in Regional and International Seminars/ Workshops/ Conferences

Dr. Md. Golam Mostafa, Information Specialist, attended the International Conference on 'Dublin Core and Metadata Applications' at Singapore on 26 August -1 September 2007.

The conference on **Dublin Core and Metadata Applications 2007** brought together leading metadata researchers and professionals from around the world to share their experience in metadata development and application, and to deliberate on theoretical issues. There were 190 participants in the conference from 33 different countries of the world. The National Library Board, Singapore, was the host in cooperation with the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University. Holding the conference in Singapore was particularly significant considering the various initiatives in Singapore to implement metadata standards for e-Government and e-Citizen sites, and research projects undertaken by the National Library Board, National

Heritage Board and the WKW School of Communication and Information on various aspects of metadata applications.

A total of 10 papers and 6 reports were selected for presentation by an international panel of reviewers. Five paper presentation sessions were organized around the following themes: conceptual modeling; application profiles - issues and practices; identification, registries and reuse; and metadata generation and integration. The full papers reported innovative original work in details or provided critical, wellreferenced overviews of key developments or good practice. Project reports described specific models, application, or activity in a concise format. Three special sessions were on the topics of ontology modeling using topic maps, RDA, and Identifiers. The pre-conference tutorials covered areas of semantics, syntax, vocabularies, and applications profiles while a post-conference seminar dealt with metadata for the semantic Web.

Dr. Md. Golam Mostafa also attended the Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centres (IASLIC) Conference on **Digital Media and Information Management** in New Delhi, India from 26-28 December 2007. The conference on Digital Media and Library information Services brought together library professionals from different parts of India and also from other countries to share their experiences on the above issues. There were more than 200 participants in the conference. The Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi was the host in cooperation with the (IASLIC), Kolkata.

There were 73 papers accepted for presentation and printed in the pre-conference volume. The conference of the **Digital Media and Library information Services** was an important milestone in the development of enhanced description and discovery of knowledge resources and provided opportunities for all the professionals engaged in development and transfer of Information Technologies to further strengthen the existing collaborative efforts.

Mr. Saleemullah Sohoo, Computer Specialist, attended the Fifth International Conference on `Information Technology in Asia under the theme "Social Computing: Engaging Communities" at Kuching, Malaysia from 10 -12 July 2007. The conference was organized by the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, University Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia. Professionals from more than 20 countries including Germany, United Kingdom, Austria, Australia, Ireland, News Zealand, Singapore, Mexico etc. participated in the conference. There were 46 full research papers and 21 short papers in the conference. The International Conference on IT in Asia reflected the increasing focus on issues concerned with ICTs in developing

countries. The main aim of the conference was to examine the continuing roles of ICTs within the prevailing challenges of development faced by the region. The conference focused on Social Computing: Engaging Communities was the result of the transformation brought about by the technological advancement of the Internet as seen through Web.

In addition to the above, the Centre arranged training for the general services staff both in the host country, Bangladesh and outside. During 2007, the following general services staff (GSS) of the Centre were trained in various organizations in Bangladesh.

Training courses organized by the Centre

(i) A seven-day training course on 'Graphics Design' in the Centre Conference Room during 27 March -17 April 2007 after the office hours. The objective of this training was to enhance the page making and printing jobs and maintaining the quality of the Centre publications. A group of SAC personnel (GSS I-H) participated in the training programme on 'Adobe Illustrator' (latest version).

(ii) A three-week training course on 'English Language Proficiency' for skill development of the GSS 1-111 staff in the Centre Conference Room during 15 September to 6 October 2007. The main objectives of the training course were to increase English language proficiency of the staff and better management of the activities of the Centre.

Training course at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Dhaka

Mr. Waliul Hasnat, Computer Operation Officer and **Mr. Saifur Rahman**, Store Keeper, participated in the training programme on 'The Public Procurement Management in Bangladesh'. The programme was held at BUET, Dhaka during 01-06 December 2007. The objectives of the course were to provide confidence building to participants for (i) proper implementation of the Public Procurement Regulations (PPR), and (ii) clear understanding of the Regulations and Procedures. The training programme helped enhance the knowledge and skills of the participants in the field of procurement as well as evaluation and review of the procurement procedures.

Visit Programme

Dr. Wais Kabir, Director, SAC attended the 34th Session of the Programme Committee Meeting of SAARC held on 03-04 December 2007 in New Delhi, India. Before going to New Delhi, Dr. Kabir visited the Writers Building on 30 November and met with the Director and Secretary of Agriculture and Deputy Director (Fertilizer), Ministry of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal, India. Dr. Kabir discussed the Centre's programmes and possibility of future linkage with Indian institutions. Dr. Wais Kabir also visited the Bidhan Chandra Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya at Nodia, West Bengal and met with Professor Aftab Zaman, Department of Agronomy and Professor Bishwapati Mondal, Department of Soil Science. Dr. Kabir discussed the Centre's programmes and activities with the professors and scope of collaborative programmes with the University. He also visited laboratories and field experiment of the University.

Mr. R. D. Siripala, Audio Visual. Specialist and **Mrs. Nasrin Akter**, Associate Editor visited Pakistan during 18-20 July 2007 to discuss with the workshop organizing committee for the organization of a regional workshop on the 'Role of Media in Agriculture' at Karachi, Pakistan.

A team of the Centre visited the following NARS institutions in 2007:

- (i) Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI), Savar, Dhaka.
- (ii) Bangladesh Jute Research Institute (BJRI), Manik Miah Avenue, Dhaka
- (iii) Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARD, Joydebpur, Gazipur.
- (iv) Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI), Joydebpur, Gazipur.

The purpose of the visit was to exchange ideas with NARS scientists and to develop networking of the Centre with the institutes.

Distinguished Visitors

His Excellency Lyonpo Chenkyab Dorji, the Secretary General of SAARC, paid an official visit to SAC, Dhaka on 6 June 2007. The Director of the Centre welcomed the Secretary General and thanked His Excellency for his kind visit to the Centre. The Secretary General had exclusive discussion with the Director and other officials. The Secretary General highly appreciated the role of SAC in providing information on research and development in agriculture and allied fields in the SAARC region.

The Secretary General underlined the need for effective dissemination of the applied agricultural technology to the grassroots level farmers in the region. He also spoke about the necessity to look for indigenous technologies available from the farmers. He emphasized the need for strengthening both inter and intra institutional for achieving maximum outputs from the regional organizations established under SAARC. In this regard, Director SAC reiterated the importance of field visits and monitoring of the agricultural activities for better understanding and capturing the enigma of the agriculture and allied sectors in the region. The Secretary General opined that the farmers of the region expect better guidelines from SAC towards developing sustainable agricultural production systems. This could be only possible after studying the region's agriculture in a holistic approach. His Excellency Lyonpo Chenkyab Dorji assured that all cooperation and necessary assistance from the SAARC Secretariat would be provided to develop the Centre as a centre of excellence.

Mr. Lila Prasad Sharma, a former Nepalese diplomat, was nominated by the Secretary General of SAARC as eminent person for the Performance Audit of all the SAARC Centres for 2007. Mr. **Sharma** visited the SAARC Agriculture Centre, Dhaka during 17-18 June 2007 for the performance audit.

Financial Report

Funds

Two types of budgets are prepared each year: Institutional and Programme Cost Budgets. In implementing the programmes, the Centre aims to maintain a balance of the expenditure between the institutional and programme costs.

The Institutional and the Programme costs are shared by all the SAARC member countries according to the SAARC apportion formula.

As the host, the Bangladesh Government provides capital costs and other infrastructure facilities. The capital cost support such as accommodation, furniture, vehicles, equipment, [etc. is](#) proposed on an occasional basis based on requirements.

The shares of contribution for each SAARC country are as follows:

Country	Programme cost share	Institutional cost share
Afghanistan	5.26%	3.09%
Bangladesh	11.28%	47.87%
Bhutan	5.26%	3.09%
India	31.92%	18.76%
Maldives	0.00%	US\$ 500 (Fixed lump sum)
Nepal	11.28%	6.63%
Pakistan	23.72%	13.93%
Sri Lanka	11.28%	6.63%
Total	100%	100%

Statement of Expenditure for the Financial Year 2007

A. Institutional Cost

Sl. No.	Items	Amount in US \$
1.	Allowances to the Director and Professional Staff	62,691.38
2.	Salaries and Allowances to GS Officers and Staff	1,38,828.74
3.	Travel Cost and Per diem	1,381.48
4.	Printing, Stationery and Reproduction	2,261.79
5.	Utilities, Services and Maintenance	7,852.02
6.	Local Hospitality for Governing Board, Selection Committee & other meetings	7,010.07
7.	Vehicles, Generator, Lift (POL), Insurance, Repairs etc.	7,384.17
8.	Contingencies (including loss/gain on exchange rates)	2,577.28
Total Institutional Cost (A)		2,29,986.93

B. Programme Cost

Sl. No.	Items	Amount in US \$
1.	Periodic Services (current awareness/SDI services etc.)	896.05
2.	SAIC Net	3,508.77
3.	Acquisition of Conventional and Non-conventional Publications in Agriculture	8,696.73
4.	SAIC Annual Report 2006	994.53
5.	SAIC Newsletter	3,415.49
6.	Food Grain Situation in SAARC Countries	285.09
7.	Statistical Bulletin of SAARC Agricultural Data	3,041.90
8.	SAARC Journal of Agriculture	2,832.83
9.	Audio-visual Production (Production of Videos)	8,982.46
10.	Reproduction of Audiovisual Products	901.23
11.	Reproduction of Information Materials	4,339.18

Sl. No.	Items	Amount in US \$
12.	CD-ROM and Computer Software	24,516.88
13.	Computer Mediated Communication of Information	7,015.45
14.	Observance of SAARC Charter Day and other SAARC and SAC Activities	1,945.34
15.	Training of SAC General Services Staff (GSS)	1,243.07
16.	Continuous Professional Development Program	7,197.49
17.	Monitoring and Backstopping Support to Programme	3,025.28
18.	Participatory Programme Building through Consultation	2,486.79
19.	Distribution of Publications and Information	9,948.87
20.	Promotional Activities of SAC and SAARC	678.40
21.	Production of Training Manual on Presentation Technology for Effective Agricultural Communication	1,100.15
22.	SAIL Vision 2020	84.80
23.	Publication on Fodder Germplasm of SAARC Countries	5,800.00
24.	Up-grading Information Resources & Library Services	8,100.87
25.	In-house research and publishing on thrust areas of agriculture in SAARC countries	1,851.46
26.	Status of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in SAARC countries	2,500.00
27.	Livelihood development through agriculture in the coastal area in SAARC countries	1,500.00
28.	Directory of Ph.D. Dissertations in SAARC Countries	3,743.63
29.	Evaluation of SAC Video films and suggestions for future improvement to reach the appropriate audience	750.00
30.	Handbook on Diseases of Livestock and Poultry in SAARC Countries	3,990.61
31.	Production of Catalogue for Insects Identified as Natural Enemies of Insect Pests of Major Food Crops in SAARC Countries	2,069.01
	Total Programme Cost (B)	1,27,442.36
	Total Institutional and Programme Cost (A+B)	3,57,429.29

Audit of SAIC Accounts for 2006

Joint Audit Team completed Audit of SAIL for 2006

The annual audit for the period 1st January to 31st December 2006 of the SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC) was conducted by a Joint Audit Team (JAT). The JAT 2006 audited the annual accounts and related statements of receipts and payments of the Centre on 28-29 June 2007 and submitted their report on 29 June 2007.

The JAT 2006 found that the Centre appropriately maintained the necessary accounts. The two-member audit team consisting of Mr. D.D.K.T. Dason, Senior Accounts Officer, Government of India, Ministry of External affairs, New Delhi, India and Mr. Ibrahim Fuad, Financial Audit Manager, Audit Office, Government of Maldives, Male, Maldives submitted their joint financial statements that reflect the state of affairs of the SAIL for the year ended on 31st December 2006.

Audit Certificate

The Annual Accounts and the related Statements of Receipts and Payments of the SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC) for the year ending 31st December 2006 were audited by a Joint Audit Team (JAT), comprising of Senior Accounts Officer from the Ministry of External affairs of India and Financial Audit Manager from Maldives Audit Office. Examinations and review of financial statements were carried out in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS) and accordingly included sample tests and other auditing procedures as considered necessary to examine the evidence supporting the accounts and disclosures made in financial statements. We obtained information and explanations necessary for the purpose of this audit.

On the basis of our audit, we are of the opinion that necessary books of accounts have been maintained by the Centre. To the best of our knowledge, the accounts of the Centre give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the SAIC for the year ended 31st December 2006 subject to the comments made in the following sections.

D.D.K.T. Dason
Fuad
Senior Accounts Officer
Audit Manager
Government of India
Ministry of External affairs
of Maldives
New Delhi, India
Maldives

Ibrahim

Financial

Audit Office
Government

Male,

Joint Audit Team

DHAKA, BANGLADESH 29 June 2007

Staff Appointment, Retirement, Resignation

Appointments

Mrs. Nasrin Akter was appointed PS to Director by the Selection Committee. Before joining, she was working as an Associate Editor at the SAARC Agriculture Centre.

Mr. M. Saifur Rahman was appointed Support Service Officer (SSO) by the Selection Committee. Before joining, he was working as Store Keeper at the SAARC Agriculture Centre.

Retirement

Mr. Kamal Mustafa Hossain, Support Service Officer of SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) retired on 30 June 2007 after serving the Centre for about 16 years.

Resignation

Mr. Md. Akhtar Hossain Chowdhury, Senior Finance Officer resigned on 31 July 2007 and joined the SAARC Secretariat on 1 August 2007 as "Accounts in ChargeII".

Appendix-I

Price List of Publication

The following publications have been published by SAC:

	Title of the Publications	Price in US\$ for SAARC Countries	Price in US\$ for other Countries	Price in BD Taka
1	Agricultural Scientists and Technologists of SAARC Countries	10.00	15.00	500.00
2	Agricultural Institutions in SAARC Countries: 3rd Edition	10.00	15.00	440.00
3	Annotated Bibliography on Agroforestry in the SAARC Region	10.00	14.00	440.00
4	Annotated Bibliography on Potato in	10.00	15.00	440.00
5	Bibliography on Fish Diseases in the	3.00	5.00	132.00
6	Database on Renewable Energy Resources in SAARC Countries	3.00	5.00	132.00
7	Directory of Agricultural Periodicals of SAARC Countries: 2nd	10.00	15.00	500.00
8	Dynamics of Agricultural Biotechnology -SAARC Bibliographical Database	10.00	15.00	440.00
9	Database on Livestock Production Breeding and Management in SAARC Countries	10.00	15.00	440.00
10	Improved Equipment for the Farm	5.00	10.00	220.00
11	Postharvest Management in Agriculture	5.00	8.00	220.00
12	Women in Agriculture, Gender issues	7.50	10.00	352.00

13.	Agricultural Training in SAARC Countries	2.00	5.00	40.00
14.	Agricultural Information Needs, Mode, Mechanism and Information	2.00	5.00	50.00
15	Bibliography on Technologies for Drought-prone and Salt-affected AEZ	3.00	5.00	100.00
16.	Success Stories on Transfer of Farm	2.00	3.00	50.00
17.	Hybrid and High Yielding Crop	2.00	3.00	50.00
18.	Innovative Agricultural Technologies	3.00	5.00	75.00
19	Regional Workshop of Experts in SAARC Countries on Transfer of Technology in Agriculture	3.00	5.00	75.00
20.	Agricultural Information Systems and	3.00	5.00	75.00
21.	Union Catalogue of Ph.D. Thesis of	3.00	5.00	75.00
22.	Development of Horticulture in the	3.00	5.00	75.00
23.	Agricultural Research and Extension	4.00	6.00	130.00
24.	Quarantine and Phytosanitary Laws	6.00	10.00	150.00
25.	Statistical Bulletin of SAARC Agricultural Data 2005	10.00	15.00	440.00
26.	Proceedings of SAARC Workshop on Soil Fertility Management for Increasing Productivity in Rice-	3.00	5.00	75.00
27.	Annotated Bibliography on Seed Quality Production and Preservation	10.00	15.00	440.00
28.	Plant Genetic Resources in SAARC Countries: Their Conservation and Management	10.00	15.00	500.00

29.	Proceedings of SAARC Workshop on	5.00	8.00	80.00
30.	Role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Poverty Alleviation through Agricultural Development in	10.00	15.00	440.00
31.	SAARC Directory of Seed Companies/ Entrepreneurs 2003	5.00	10.00	150.00
32.	SAARC Journal of Agriculture Vol. 4, 2006	10.00	15.00	125.00
33.	Proceedings of the Regional Workshop on Attempts and Successes of ICT Roadmap to Villages in	10.00	15.00	
34.	Technologies on Livestock and Fisheries for Poverty Alleviation in	5.00	7.00	150.00
35.	Handbook on Fish and Crustacean Diseases in the SAARC Region			-
36.	Risk in Agriculture and Their Coping Strategies in SAARC Countries	5.00	7.00	100.00
37.	Foodgrain Situation in SAARC Countries	-	-	-
38.	SAIC Newsletter	-	-	-
39.	Impact Study of SAIC Publications	-	-	-
40.	Annual Report 2006	-	-	
41.	Guide on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants of SAARC Countries	10.00	15.00	500.00
42.	Research-Extension Linkages for Effective Delivery of Agricultural Technologies in SAARC Countries	5.00	7.00	200.00
43.	Directory of Ph.D. Dissertations on Agriculture in SAARC Countries, Volume 1, Bangladesh	10.00	15.00	500.00

44.	Crop Varieties in SAARC Countries	3.00	5.00	100.00
45	Catalogue on Natural Enemies of the Insect Pests of Food Crops in SAARC Countries	5.00	15.00	300.00
46.	Handbook on Livestock and Poultry		–	–
47.	Training Manual and Interactive Multimedia CD ROMs on Presentation Technology	3.00	5.00	50
48.	Statistical Data Book for Agricultural Research and Development in SAARC Countries	8.00	10.00	300.00
49	Regional Programme Development in Agriculture through Consultations	-		
50	Vision 2020			

Note: (i) The booksellers in SAARC countries will receive 25% commission on all SAIC Publications. (ii) Prices in the above list are inclusive of postal charges, applicable only in SAARC member countries.

Appendix -II

Personnel

Dr. Wais Kabir	Director
Mr. M. A. Rashid	Deputy Director (CIAV)
Mr. Saleemullah Sohoo	Computer Specialist
Mr. R.D. Siripala	Audio Visual Specialist
Dr. Md. Golam Mostafa	Information Specialist
Mr. Mohammad Abdullah	Editor
Mr. A.H. Chowdhury	Sr. Finance Officer
Mr. Kamal Mustafa Hossain	Support Service Officer
Mr. S. M. Chowdhury	Video Production Officer
Mrs. Mafruha Begum	Artist
Mrs. Nasrin Akter	Associate Editor
Mr. Md. Waliul Hasnat	Computer Operation Officer
Mr. Md. Abdul Kadir	Data Entry Operator
Mr Md. Mizanur Rahman	Data Entry Operator
Mr. A.T.M. Mostafizur Rahman Majumder	Accounts Assistant
Mr. Md. Nurul Wara	Video Production Assistant
Mr. Mizanur Rahman	Steno Typist
Mr. Ananda Chandra Kha	Typist
Mrs. Raihana Kabir	Production Assistant
Mrs. Nazmoon Nahar	Cataloguer
Mr. Iqbal Karim	Office Assistant
Mr. Md. Saifur Rahman	Store Keeper
Mr. Nurul Amin	Driver
Mr. Rafiqul Islam	Driver
Mr. Shahidul Alam Khan	Lift-cum-Generator Operator
Mr. Harun-or-Rashid	Messenger
Mr. Helal Uddin	Messenger
Mr. Altaf Hossain	Sweeper
Mr. Abu Taher	Scavenger
Mr. Akter Hossain	Watchman