

Title: Regional Consultation Meeting on Strengthening High Value Vegetable Seed System in SAARC Countries

Host organization: Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperative (MoLMAC), Pokhara, Gandaki Province, Nepal

Date: 22-24 December 2019

Brief summary:

Regional Consultation Meeting on Strengthening High Value Vegetable Seed System in SAARC Countries was jointly organized by SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) and Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperative (MoLMAC), Gandaki Province, Nepal during 22-24 December 2019 at Shangri-La Village Resort Pokhara, Nepal.

Mr. Achyut Prasad Dhakal, honorable Secretary, MoLMAC Gandaki Province, chaired the session and Mr. Lekh Bahadur Thapa, Honorable Minister for the Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperative, Gandaki Province, inaugurated the consultation meeting as the chief guest of the session by traditional lighting of lamp. Dr. Sheikh Mohammad Bokhtiar, Director, SAC and Dr. Grishma Neupane, Chief, Planning and Monitoring Division, MoLMAC, Gandaki Province graced the occasion as special guests.

Appreciating the SAARC Agriculture Center for organizing this consultation meeting in Pokhara, the capital of Gandaki province, the Chair of the Session, Mr. Achyut Prasad Dhakal stated that vegetable seed is one of the high potential agricultural sub-sectors which can contribute much to poverty reduction and enhancing food and nutritional security in remote areas of South Asian countries. He also mentioned that Gandaki province has recently moved into federalism. It is a renowned tourist place in Nepal. Though tourism contributes much to rural livelihood, still 71.4% of population is actively engaged in agriculture as their main occupation. Hence, the Government of Nepal is giving much emphasis on the seed system which is regarded as the most important agriculture inputs. He expressed that through this meeting SAC would be able to identify the gaps in the vegetable seed system in the region, and, accordingly outline subsequent programs.

Enlightening about the background of SAARC and SAC, Dr. Bokhtiar, director of SAC, as the guest of honour stated that the population of the world is increasing, to feed this growing population, 60 percent more food need to be produced by 2050. Quality seeds are one of the necessary factors for increasing crop yield. Good quality seeds can increase yields significantly and in some cases could double the yield. High quality vegetable seed helps improve livelihoods of farmers producing both the seeds and fresh commodities. He also stated that supply of quality high yielding seeds will have to be increased in achieving SDG-2 in the region. Stressing the importance of system approach for achieving desired goal he stated that, system needs to be given much priority rather individual components.

The chief guest of the session, Mr. Lekh Bahadur Thapa, Honorable Minister for the Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperative, Gandaki Province, stated that about one-third of Nepalese economy is based on agriculture and the country has significant opportunity for cultivation of wide range

of crops. Hilly areas are suitable for fruit / vegetable farming. Due to its geographical location Gandaki province has extensive potential for vegetable seed production. He also said that for the development of overall seed sector, Nepalese Government has prepared the National Seed Vision (2013-2025). Targeting to self-reliance in seeds sector, the Government of Nepal has established National Seed Laboratories. He also noted key activities of seed sector development by the provincial government, like, seed production, processing, certification and marketing regulation, development of seed value chain, ethnic seed promotion, etc. Pointing out the bottleneck of seed system in Nepal he mentioned that to overcome these challenges all members of SAARC countries should work together.

In the welcome address, Dr. Nasreen Sultana, SPS (Horticulture), and the coordinator of the program stated that the common goal of the meeting is to strengthen the current high value vegetable seed system development in SSARC region, preliminarily by sharing the knowledge among experts on the status of current vegetable seed system in their respective countries. Secondly, identifying gaps in the current system by putting brains together, and outline future program efficiently on how to strengthen current seed system by establishing a SAARC vegetable seed platform/network with regional stakeholders for sharing the technologies of production, creating linkages among actors, standardization of quality and facilitation of trade. Stressing on transformation of subsistence Agriculture to commercial Agriculture she stated that the ultimate objective is to strengthen the process of transformation of present agriculture system by creating enabling environment to increase participation in regional and global trade through learning more on seed system, seed quality standards and conformity assessment issues.

The session was closed with the vote of thanks by Dr. Grishma Neupane, Chief, Planning and Monitoring Division, MoLMAC Gandaki province.

After inauguration, technical sessions and field visit were conducted according the schedule presented in the annexure (Table 2).



Objectives

The main objectives of the training program are:

1. To review the current status of high value vegetable seed production, supply and distribution systems in the region;
2. To identify opportunities and challenges of seed system development, and
3. To identify possible ways for regional cooperation of developing a seed system in the region.

Salient achievements

- Fourteen (14) stakeholders of vegetable seed system in SAARC countries attended the consultation meeting among which six were from six SAARC Member States (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka). List of participants is presented in Annexure (Table 1).
- Ten (10) articles were presented and discussed in the meeting. Among which six were by six regional experts and four (04) were by local stakeholders like, private seed company association, non-government development organization, provincial seed researchers and provincial authority.
- Regional experts were exposed to visit village seed cooperative and interacted with the members (seed producers and collectors).

Recommendations:

- For identifying the gaps in any system, representatives of all stakeholders groups of that system should be included in the consultation meeting.

Challenges:

- Receiving nominations from member states on time was a big challenge.
- Consequently, arranging hotel accommodation, transport, etc. becomes extremely difficult to coordinate. Programme had to be postponed from the first schedule in last minutes in November 2019, and finally took place at the end of December 2019.
- Limited budget is challenging to design a highly effective program.

Lessons Learned:

- More experts from Member states should be included (covering as many stakeholders groups as possible).
- Field visit and discussion with seed farmers was very effective to understand the real situation of the seed sector of Nepal.
- Presentation by the invited local participants (local seed system stakeholders, such as Research, Privet sector, NGO and Provincial Government) was also very much effective.

Annexure:

Table 1: List participants

	country	name	designation	Office address	contacts
1	Afghanistan	Mohammad Jawed Mehrabi	Seed-Borne disease diagnosis Specialist	Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock	Tel: +93778434959 m_jawid@yahoo.com
2	Bangladesh	Ms. Momena Akhter Sweety	Assistant Director	Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation	880-1712845888 aschobadc@gmail.com
3	Bhutan	Mr. Sonam	Program Director/ Specialist	National Seed Centre, Department of Agriculture, Ministry of	bumthap@yahoo.com

				Agriculture and Forestry	
4	India	Dr. Chander Mohan	Assistant Commissioner (Seeds)	Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare	acseed-agri@gov.in 0091-9760828868
5	Nepal	Narayan Kafle	Senior Horticulture Development Officer	Department of Agriculture Ministry of Agriculture Development	narankaphle@gmail.com +977-9857032270
6	Sri Lanka	Mr. M. C. Jayasinghe	Additional Director (Development)	Seed and Planting Material Development Centre, Department of Agriculture	jayasinghe70c@gmail.com 00 94-718319224
7	SAC	Dr. Younus Ali	Senior Technical Officer	SAARC Agriculture Centre, Dhaka, Bangladesh	nilkanthpokharel@gmail.com +88-01716500276
8	Local partner	Mr. Yubraj Bhusal	Senior Scientist	Horticulture Research Centre, Malepatan, Pokhara	arsmalepatan@gmail.com 9856038550
9		Mr. Salik Ram Adhikari	Senior Agriculture Officer	Agriculture Knowledge Centre	salikum@gmail.com 9856028444
10		Pitamber Shrestha	Program Operation Director	Local Initiative for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LiBiRD), Pokhara	pitambar@libird.org 9856030578
11		Mr. Kul Prasad Subedi	President	Seed Entrepreneur Association of Nepal (Gandaki province)	kpsubedi16@gmail.com 9856034694
12		Mr Manahar Kadariya	Senior Agriculture Officer	Agriculture and Livestock Division/Pokhara Municipality Division	rahakam@gmail.com 9856053320
13		Mr. Narayan Prasad Gautam	President	Seed Entrepreneur Association of Nepal (Kaski)	narayan_gtm@yahoo.com 9856026537
14		Mr. Madhav Lamsal	Senior Agriculture Officer	PMAMP Mustang	madhav.lamsal@gmail.com +9779856057286
15		Mr. Nilkantha Pokharel	Acting Chief	Agriculture Development Directorate	nilkanthpokharel@gmail.com +977 9841360736
16		Ms. Jyoti	Agriculture	Ministry of Land	jyotichhetripr@gmail.com

		Chhetri	Economist	Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives, Gandaki	+977 9856049138
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Table 2. Program Schedule

Inaugural Session, 22 December 2019			
Time	Activity	Responsible	Duration
10:30-11:00	Guests arrival and Registration	Mr. Arjun Dev Ms. Amrit Regmi	30 Mins
11:00	Chairing the opening session	Mr. Achyut Prasad Dhakal, Secretary, MoLMAC Gandaki Province, Pokhara	
11:00-11:05	Seat taking by distinguished guest <i>Chief Guest: Hon' Lekh Bahadur Thapa, Minister-MoLMAC Gandaki Province</i> Guest of Honour: Dr. S. M.Bokhtiar, Director, SAARC Agriculture Centre, Dhaka, Bangladesh <i>Special Guest: Dr. Grishma Neupane, Chief Planning and Monitoring Division-MoLMAC Gandaki Province</i> Seat taking by SAARC, regional and local participants		05 Min
11:05-11:10	National Anthem of the Federal Republic of Nepal		05 Min
11:10	Official opening of the program	<i>Lekh Bahadur Thapa, Chief Guest</i>	
11:10-11:20	Introduction of the participants		10 Min
11:20-11:30	Welcome remarks and Overview of program	Dr. Nasreen Sultana, Senior Program Specialist (Horticulture), SAARC Agriculture Centre	10 Min
11:30-11:40	Remarks by Guest of Honour	Dr. S. M.Bokhtiar	10 min
11:40-11:55	Remarks	Chief guest	15 Min
12:00-12:10	Remarks by Chairperson	Mr. Achyut Prasad Dhakal	10 Min
12:10-12:15	Vote of Thanks	Mr. Sudip	05 min
12:15-12:45	Group Photograph & Tea break		30 Min
Time	Activity	Responsible	Duration
Plenary Session I			
Chair person: Dr. S. M.Bokhtiar		Rapporteur: Mr. Shalik Ram Adhikari	

12:45-1:15	Country Status Paper Presentation from Afghanistan	Mr. Mohammad Jawed Mehrabi , Seed-Borne disease diagnosis Specialist, Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock, Afghanistan	30 Min
1:15-1:45	Country Status Paper Presentation from Bangladesh	Mr. Mostafa Salam , Joint Director (Vegetable seed), Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC)	30 Min
01:45-02:00	Discussion		15 Min
02:00-03:00	Lunch break		60 Min
Plenary Session II			
Chairperson: Mr. Nilkantha Pokharel		Rapporteur: Mr. Manahar Kadariya	
03:00-03:30	Country Status Paper Presentation from Bhutan	Mr. Sonam , Program Director/ Specialist, National Seed Centre, Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	30 Min
03:30-04:00	Country Status Paper Presentation from India	Dr. Chander Mohan , Assistant Commissioner (Seeds), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare	30 Min
04:00-04:15	Discussion		15 Min
04:15-04:45	Tea break		15 Min
Plenary Session III			
Chairperson: Mr. Nilkantha Pokharel		Rapporteur: Mr. Madhab Lamsal	
04:45-05:15	Country Status Paper Presentation from Nepal	Mr. Narayan Kafle , Senior Horticulture Development Officer, Department of Agriculture Ministry of Agriculture Development	30 Min
05:15-05:45	Country Status Paper Presentation from Sri Lanka	Mr. M. C. Jayasinghe , Additional Director (Development), Seed and Planting Material Development Centre, Department of Agriculture	30 Min
05:45-06:00	Discussion		15 Min
06:00-06:15	Closing remarks		15 Min
06:15-06:45	Planning for visit		30 Min
07:00-09:00	Reception dinner		

Day Second (24 December 2019): Field Trip

10:00-10:30	Board on bus to field travel		30 Min
10:30-11:30	Field visit to Horticulture Research Station, Malepatan, Pokhara	Mr. Yub Raj Bhusal	30 Min
	Interaction with the research team		
11:30-12:30	Visit to Fewa Lake (Agro-diversity)		
12:30-01:30	Lunch		
01:30-03:00	Interaction with Seed Producing communities, Arva	Mr. Pitambar Shrestha	30 Min
03:30-4:30	Visit to Pokhara Seed Company	Mr. Narayan Gautam	
04:30-04:00	Travel to hotel		
04:00	Tea Breaks		
04:00-05:00	Preparing conclusions of field observation identifying gaps in seed system how to fill gaps	Assigned Group	60 Min
05:00-05:30	Presentation	Assigned Group	30 Min

Day Third (24 December 2019) Plenary Session I

Chairperson: Dr. Nasreen Sultana

Rapporteur: Ms. Jyoti Chhetri

10:15-10:45	Role of Provincial Government: Strengthening High Value Vegetable Seed System	<i>Mr. Nilkantha Pokharel</i> Agriculture Development Directorate, Gandaki	30 Min
10:45-11:15	Discussion		15 Min
11:15-11:45	Role of Research: Strengthening High Value Vegetable Seed System	<i>Mr. Yubraj Bhusal</i> , Senior Scientist, Horticulture Research Centre, Malepatan, Pokhara	30 Min
11:45-12:00	Discussion		15 Min
12:00-12:30	Tea break		30 Min
12:30-01:00	Role of Non-Government Organization: Strengthening High Value Vegetable Seed System	<i>Mr. Pitambar Shrestha</i> , Regional Operational Director, LiBird, Pokhara	30 Min
01:00-01:15	Discussion		15 Min
01:15-02:15	Lunch break		60 Min
02:15-02:45	Role of Private Sector: Strengthening High Value Vegetable Seed System	<i>Mr. Kul Prasad Subedi</i> , Chairperson, SEAN Gandaki	30 Min
02:45-03:00	Discussion		15 Min

03:00-03:15	Tea break	15 Min
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Closing session

Chair person: Mr. Achyut Prasad Dhakal

Rapporteur: Mr. Shalik Ram Adhikari

03:15-03:30	Seat taking by distinguished guest and participants		
03:30-03:40	Closing Remarks	SAC official	10 Min
03:40-03:50	Closing Remarks	Representing SAARC countries participants	10 Min
03:50-04:00	Closing Remarks	Local participants	10 Min
04:00-04:10	Vote of Thanks	Mr. Sudip Khatiwada	10 Min
04:10-04:30	Presenting the momentum and certificates		20 Min
04:30-04:45	Closing remarks	Chairperson	