



Fourth Steering Committee Meeting of Asia- Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB)

November 6, 2005
Rama Gardens Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

Introduction and Welcome

The Fourth Steering Committee meeting of APCoAB was held on 6 November 2005 at Rama Gardens Hotel, Bangkok under the Chairmanship of Dr. H. P. M. Gunasena, Chairman APAARI. Dr. Gunasena welcomed all the participants and apprised them about APCoAB as a programme functioning under the umbrella of APAARI. He expressed concern on the role of biotechnology vis-à-vis its application to meet particularly the needs of small farmers, and overall, to mitigate poverty and malnutrition with emphasis on food security and biosafety aspects. He laid emphasis on greater use of underutilized crops, their improvement and use for the resource poor. He stressed on capacity building needs of NARS at various levels in diverse disciplines of biotechnology. He pointed out that APAARI was giving high priority to biotechnology for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in international perspective and its diverse use by less-developed and well-developed NARS/countries. He appreciated the thrust provided by Dr. R. S. Paroda, Executive Secretary APAARI to push forth this programme.

Dr. Paroda while welcoming the Steering Committee members and the invitees, expressed that APCoAB looks forward to their advice, so that its activities are channelized in right direction, particularly for the implementation of its yearly work plan. He expressed his thanks in particular to Dr. Andrew Bennett and Dr. Behrad Ghareyazie special invitees to this meeting and to Dr. Jerry Flint to attend the meeting for the first time. He thanked Dr. William Dar for the Secretarial support provided by ICRISAT at its Delhi Office, as also the support from FAO and GFAR. He also emphasized that APCoAB needs further strengthening to make it sustainable.

APCoAB Achievements/ Progress Report

Dr. Paroda made a power point presentation on APCoAB activities mainly focusing on progress made since the last meeting held on 28 June 2005 at New Delhi. For some of the participants attending APCoAB Steering Committee meeting for the first time, he elaborated on the genesis of APCoAB as programme under APAARI, its mission, goals, objectives and work planned in strategic areas covering policy, capacity building, public awareness etc.



Active Session of the Steering Committee

Dr. Paroda pointed out that :(1). APCoAB has been activity facilitating APAARI in executing the programme, logistics etc. for holding the High Level Policy Dialogue on Biotechnology being organized by APAARI - FAO – GFAR.(2).A revised Flyer has been published for information dissemination and wider distribution as public awareness material.(3).The publication entitled “Commercialization of Bt Corn in the Philippines : A Status Report” has been brought out and has been distributed widely in the region, particularly to NARS where maize is an important crop, for information and technology transfer, adoption etc.(4).Another Status Report on “Bt Cotton in India” is being finalized. Also, we will get another status report written on “Bt Cotton in China” subsequently to be published by APCoAB.(5).The APCoAB website is operational (www.apcoab.org) and is updated by APCoAB office, New Delhi, periodically with relevant information.(6). A brief report on recent APCoAB activities has been included in GFAR newsletter, APAARI newsletter and also sent to APSA upon request to be included in their bulletin.(7). Efforts are being made to get information synthesized on conventional biotechnology applications/ use in diverse ways on a number of crops by NARS experts. Concerned scientists/ institutes have been approached. The Central Potato Research Institute, Shimla, India, has agreed to prepare a report on micropropagation of potato, tissue-culture application, crop improvement aspects/ disease resistance etc. Other crops identified are sugarcane, taro, oil palm, date palm and also orchids. (8) APCoAB budget, funding position was explained, and concern expressed that to make APCoAB sustainable, suitable strengthening of Secretariat and long-term commitment for funding was critical.

Discussion Outcome / Suggestions

Based on the progress report presented and the work plan for 2006 on APCoAB activities, good discussion followed. Dr. Paroda in particular requested the SC members and invitees for their advice so as to make APCoAB more effective. Important views were expressed by Drs. Andrew Bennett, Ola Smith, Malcom Hazelman, Behrad Ghareyazie, Ghodake and William Dar. Overall, the views expressed/ issues raised related to the following aspects.

Work Plan and Prioritizing Activities

(1) Work plan needs to be modified and a few number of activities be taken up; also activities need to be prioritized. Public awareness and capacity building need to be given high priority.

(2) Some of the concerns of NARS are common in the regional context and these activities need to be well coordinated. These at the regional, sub-regional level are :a) Biosafety and regulatory aspects; b)Training needs/ capacity building, and c) Conventional biotechnology and its application

(3) There is need to assess requirements of less developed NARS and work out cost effective approach to meet their needs by utilizing expertise of well-developed NARS in the Asia-Pacific region.

Collaboration Needs

(4) It was suggested that APCoAB collaborates with ICRISAT in media awareness workshop and undertakes other activities such as workshop on Biosafety- regulatory needs at regional / sub-regional level. Also APCoAB needs to have collaboration with relevant organizations such as with ISAAA for Public Awareness and ICGEB for Capacity Building needs.

(5) For enabling public-private-partnership more effective participation of private sector was stressed. It was felt that efforts be made to inventorize existing PPP studies undertaken by the NARS of the Asia-Pacific region involving national programmes, regional and/or international partnerships. Also, some specific case studies / models on such partnerships be brought out.

Other concerns

(6) There is need to float a clear message among NARS, that biotechnology is not all GMOs, that its applications relate both to GM technology and non-GM/ conventional biotech approaches.

(7) There is need to identify suitable biotech. nodal institutes within NARS to facilitate coordination / networking of activities on agricultural biotechnology.

(8) Apart from the publications planned, APCoAB needs to inventorize the existing available information on biosafety and regulatory aspects and policy issues for different NARS/ countries in Asia Pacific, and to look into possible mechanisms to harmonize these guidelines for NARS in regional/sub-regional context.

(9) Dr. William Dar suggested that Iran need to be included as a member of APCoAB Steering Committee representing the West-Asia and CWANA region. This was agreed to by all participants.

(10) UNEP/GEF may be approached for assistance/ support on activities such as developing biosafety framework/ associated training/ workshop needs; in collaboration with ICRISAT, ICGEB and other selected centres as required.

The participants appreciated the overall progress achieved by APCoAB. Also for more support for future activities, Chairman appealed to the members and special invitees, especially to Dr. Bennett, Dr. Flint, Dr. Ola Smith and Dr. Ghareyazie to consider providing additional support. Also Dr. Dar was requested to extend institutional support for joint activities during 2006.

Winding up the meeting, both Dr. Gunasena and Dr. Paroda thanked the members for their valuable inputs and assured for a quick follow-up on their suggestions.



Participants having an APCoAB Update

Annexure I

List of Participants

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Annexure II



Asia –Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology (APCoAB)
Fourth Steering Committee Meeting
6th November, 2005
Rama Gardens Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

Agenda

15:00 – 16:30	Welcome address by the Chairman APAARI
	Adoption of Agenda
	A Brief Update on Progress Made
	Discussion on APCoAB Activities
16:30 – 17:00	Coffee Break & Group Photograph
17:00 – 18.30	Work Plan 2006
	Overall Budget Position
	Any Other Item
	Concluding Remarks
