

## An INIBAP Newsletter for Asia and the Pacific Network

### *1<sup>st</sup> Banana Asia Pacific Network (BAPNET) Steering Committee Meeting held in the Philippines*

The Banana Asia Pacific Network (BAPNET), formerly named ASPNET, was relaunched this year. The Steering Committee members represent the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) of member countries (Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam) and 2 institutions (TBRI-Taiwan Banana Research Institute and the SPC-Secretariat of the Pacific Community – representing 22 countries in the South Pacific). This year's meeting was highlighted by the participation of two new members namely Cambodia and Papua New Guinea who joined the regular members in a 100% attendance record.

The 1<sup>st</sup> BAPNET Steering Committee meeting was held on 7-10 October 2002 in Los Banos, Philippines. The conference was hosted by Dr. Patricio S. Faylon, Executive Director of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), and Dr. Eliseo Ponce, Director of the Bureau of Agricultural Research/Department of Agriculture (DA-BAR).

The meeting aimed at formulating specific programmes and activities through coordinated R&D approach toward the sustainable development of banana and plantain in Asia-Pacific anchored on a coherent R&D strategy based on the needs and priorities of partner NARS. Country

representatives presented their industry and banana R&D status report. A special lecture on MGIS-DIVA regarding the use of GIS on germplasm management was



*BAPNET Steering Committee Members*

presented. A workshop followed these presentations, whose objectives were to identify programmes of collaboration based on member NARS' banana industry status, strengths, constraints, opportunities and thrusts and to prioritize programmes of collaboration in Asia-Pacific for the next 3-5 years using consensually formulated criteria. Priority programs identified were (1) sustainable crop management systems, (2) information exchange and management, (3) genetic diversity management, development and utilization, (4) human resource development, (5) supply chain management system, and (6) extension. All members reiterated their interest to participate in the various INIBAP programs/activities such as the IMTP, MGIS and information development and exchange. Inherent needs of this collaboration would be the enhancement of human resource through training and knowledge exchange. The meeting strengthened the importance of INIBAP programmes that can enhance the

BAPNET priorities. The National Repository-Multiplication program where INIBAP-IMTP varieties are transferred to the NARS for easy access by researchers and farmers fits well to the desire of BAPNET member countries to seek for new varieties that are productive and resistant to major diseases in the region.

With INIBAP-Asia Pacific as the secretariat of the network, BAPNET will develop concrete activities to operationalize the programme priorities developed in the meeting. Resource identification,

mobilization and commitments will be pursued to implement projects and activities. As a NARS initiated network, BAPNET will work more effectively to address regional needs, enhance better regional collaboration and take full advantage of its inherent link with INIBAP programmes.

The meeting was attended by 15 representatives of country and institutional members. Resource persons included Ms Suzanne Sharrock, Germplasm Conservation Scientist of INIBAP, and Dr Luigi Guarino, a DIVA software expert working as Plant Genetic Resources Adviser of the SPC. Dr Jaine Reyes acted as Facilitator during the workshop sessions. The Pisang Raja, Institutional and Special Awards were presented during the meeting.

## BAPNET and INIBAP honour the 2002 Awardees

During the Banana Asia Pacific Network (BAPNET) Steering Committee meeting on 7 October 2002, special awards were bestowed on individuals and institutions that have contributed significantly in banana production technology and promotion of banana R&D programs.

The Pisang Raja award was established in 1994 by the Asia Pacific Network. Pisang is the common term for banana in Malaysia and Indonesia while Raja is a title given to the region's nobility which can only be attained through demonstrated leadership, performance, intelligence and wisdom. For this year, BAPNET presented this award to Ms. Suzanne

Sharrock. She is the Germplasm Conservation Scientist of INIBAP. Her contributions dates back in 1988 when she led on behalf of the International Board of Plant Genetic Resources (IBPGR), now International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), four collecting missions in Papua New Guinea assembling more than 200 accessions. She was always generous in sharing her expertise on *Musa* conservation, guiding people in *Musa* taxonomy, and making people aware of the importance of conserving *Musa* diversity. She has several publications which includes a catalogue of *Musa* diversity, *Musalogue*. She initiated to link the *Musa* Germplasm Information System (MGIS) database to a Geographic Information System which aims to help researchers in their analyses and decision-making on genetic resources and their conservation.

Institutional Awards were also given in recognition for their support to regional banana R&D activities. Recognition was given to the Lapanday Agricultural and Development Corporation (LADECO), the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR), Philippines, and the Philippine Council of Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD).

LADECO is a private company in the Philippines who has cooperated and is an active participant of INIBAP programmes/activities such as the International *Musa* Testing Program (IMTP) III and the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Workshop on *Mycosphaerella* leaf spot diseases of banana in May 2002. LADECO plays a big role in helping the local small scale banana industry by producing tissue culture planting materials of local

cultivars as well as selected INIBAP IMTP improved varieties at reasonable price and provides free training on nursery management to researchers. It has provided financial contribution in support to the study of variability of leaf spot disease in the Philippines and the publication of proceedings.

The DA-BAR co-hosted the first BAPNET meeting. It has a strong commitment in banana R&D and provides an annual financial contribution to IPGRI/INIBAP towards the conservation, characterization and evaluation of *Musa* germplasm in the Philippines. Furthermore, additional funding was provided for a 3-year program to accelerate the evaluation, dissemination and

adoption of improved *Musa* varieties through the National Repository, Multiplication and Dissemination Program.

The PCARRD sponsored and hosted the INIBAP office for Asia and the Pacific in the Philippines in 1991. The partnership of PCARRD and INIBAP has strengthened and effectively enhanced INIBAP's present efforts. PCARRD hosted and co-hosted the International Workshop on Identification of Genetic Diversity of the Genus *Musa* on 5-10 September 1988, the Regional Consultation on Banana and Plantain R&D Networking on 20-24 November 1989, the first Consultation Workshop of the Regional Information System for Banana and Plantain on 1-3 April 1996, Regional Workshop on Disease Management of Banana and Citrus on 14-16 October 1998 and this year the first Banana Asia Pacific Network Steering Committee Meeting on 7-10 October 2002.

Lastly, a Special Plaque of Recognition was presented by INIBAP to Dr. Ramon V. Valmayor. This is in recognition for his outstanding contribution to international banana research and especially his dedication to supporting activities in the Asia Pacific region, where he became the founding Coordinator of the Asia-Pacific regional network in 1991. He has served for seven years as INIBAP Regional Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific during which time he worked untiringly to promote banana research and collaboration in the region, and the two subsequent years providing continued support to INIBAP as Honorary Research Fellow. His dedication to research on the taxonomy and classification of *Musa* has resulted to the publication



Suzanne Sharrock receives the Pisang Raja Award from PCARRD Executive Director Patricio Faylon, BAPNET Chair.

## INIBAP-AP and Lapanday, an efficient collaboration for the improvement of the Philippine banana industry

The International Network for the Improvement of Banana and Plantain - Asia Pacific (INIBAP-AP) regional office have found a good partner in the Lapanday Agricultural and Development Corporation (LADECO or simply Lapanday), a private corporation specializing in food export business based in Davao City, Philippines.

The partnership started when the INIBAP-AP's Regional Coordinator Dr. Agustin Molina was looking for new partners in the private industry who could do banana research for the International *Musa* Testing Programme Phase III (IMTP III). As the research activity went on, INIBAP- AP found that Lapanday has an efficient tissue culture (TC) laboratory that could help in other activities in the Philippines. Lapanday has been supplying TC materials of the IMTP for national distribution. Lapanday also served as

INIBAP's partner in providing training for national partners in the field of tissue culture, nursery and field operations and maintenance. They have also contributed funds to INIBAP towards the study of leaf spot diseases of bananas and participated actively in the 3rd International Workshop on *Mycosphaerella* Leaf Spot of Banana in Costa Rica.



IMTP Trial in Lapanday, Philippines

## Two improved INIBAP accessions released for commercial use in Sri Lanka

The Department of Agriculture (DOA) in Sri Lanka has identified two promising adaptable banana varieties from the germplasm collection, which was transferred to the Sri Lankan government in 1999 for the International *Musa* Testing Program Phase II (IMTP II).

After a series of field evaluations in replicated trials in different locations, DOA has recommended SH 3640 and FHIA 3 to the Variety Release Committee and they were subsequently selected for adoption and commercialization. These accessions were given the local names Kandula and Pulathesi, respectively.

Dr. Sujatha Weerasinghe of the Horticultural Research and Development Institute, DOA, former Sri Lankan Representative to INIBAP-ASPNET's Regional Advisory Committee, was behind in all the efforts to test INIBAP accessions and eventually offer Sri Lanka farmers an alternative to the local banana varieties.



FHIA 3



SH 3640

### BAPNET and INIBAP honour...

of the "Banana Names and Synonyms in Southeast Asia" and "The Wild and Cultivated Bananas in the Philippines" important reference works in the international community. He has initiated collecting missions covering Vietnam, South China, Indonesia and Northeast India, resulting in the discovery of many undescribed banana species and cultivars. He has several publications and articles on *Musa*. He was also a recipient of the Pisang Raja award in 1998.



Designed by:  
Simeon Manahan  
PCARRD Artist, Philippines

## The New BAPNET Logo

The circle symbolizes the global perspective of **BAPNET** although it operates in the Asia-Pacific, as symbolized by the map.

The 14 bananas represent the members of the network—12 national agricultural research systems (NARS) and two other institutions in Asia.

The banana leaf, the part that manufactures the plant's food, represents R&D efforts, the network's reason for being.

Applying the closure principle, the word **BAPNET** completes the circle of banana R&D in the Asia-Pacific. In effect, **BAPNET** strengthens the dynamic nature of banana R&D efforts in the region.

The yellow (color of light) signifies hope for continued strength and relevance of the network. The green (color of life) signifies growth and resource sustainability of banana R&D.

### Guest of Honour



Dr. Estrella F. Alabastro,  
Secretary, Dept. of Science and  
Technology delivering her  
message during the closing  
ceremonies.

### Conference Hosts



Dr. Eliseo Ponce  
DA-BAR Director



Dr. Patricio S. Faylon  
PCARRD Executive Director

The BAPNET Steering Committee  
in session.



Dr. Agustin B. Molina, INIBAP  
Regional Coordinator for Asia-  
Pacific and BAPNET Secretary



**RISBAP** - Regional Information System for Banana and Plantain is a regional mechanism of improving the dissemination, utilization, and access of information on banana and plantain in the Asia and the Pacific region. The *RISBAP Bulletin* is published by the INIBAP - Asia and Pacific Network. Write us at: INIBAP-A/P, c/o IRRI, Khush Hall, College, Laguna 4031 Philippines; Tel/Fax. (63) 49-536-0532; E-mail: [inibap.bapnet@cgiar.org](mailto:inibap.bapnet@cgiar.org); <http://www.inibap.org>.