

11th Meeting of the Interregional Cooperative Network on Cotton for the Mediterranean and Middle East Regions

The 11th Meeting of the Interregional Cooperative Network on Cotton for the Mediterranean and Middle East Regions was held in Antalya, Turkey from November 5-7, 2012. Delegates from Bulgaria, Egypt, Greece, India, Mozambique, Spain, Sudan, Pakistan, Turkey, CIRAD and ICAC attended the meeting. The meeting elected Dr. Mohamed A. M. El-Sayed Negm of Egypt as the new General Coordinator until next meeting of the Network.

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A summary of important discussions/decisions is as follows:

- In the inaugural session, the meeting acknowledged contributions of the previous two General Coordinators Dr. Michel Braud of CIRAD and Dr. Urania Kechagia of Greece. The Organizing Committee awarded them shields on behalf of the countries in the regions in recognition of their services to the Network for over 20 years.
- The newly elected General Coordinator Mohamed A. M. El-Sayed Negm in consultation with Dr. Oktay Gencer, Ex General Coordinator will appoint National Coordinators in all countries in the regions. Some names were finalized during the meeting, Bulgaria (Dr. Ana Stoilova), Egypt (Dr. Suzan Sanat), Greece (Dr. Apostolos Kalyvas), Spain (Mr. Felipe Ray), Sudan (Dr. Ahmed M. Mustafa) and Turkey (Dr. Fehmi Gülyasar). The General Coordinator will publish that list on the web. CIRAD will make a nomination for France.
- The meeting decided to activate the four working groups i.e. Breeding and Biotechnology, Agronomy, Fiber Technology and Economics. In this regard the General Coordinator was instructed to take necessary actions and encourage/arrange working group meeting before the next meeting of the network. The groups and their new chairmen are
 - Breeding and Biotechnology – Dr. Bojin Bojinov, Bulgaria
 - Agronomy - Dr. Hüseyin Başal, Turkey
 - Fiber Technology - Dr. Dr. Eleni Tsaliki, Greece
 - Economic - Dr. Michel Fok, CIRAD
- Researchers in the regions will be encouraged to use e-mailing list hosted by the ICAC for communications among researchers. The General Coordinator will work with the ICAC Secretariat to expand subscription to the list.
- The General Coordinator was assigned to increase participation in the Network meetings. Invitations for the next meeting will be issued by name and additional sources of funding will be secured to sponsor more researchers to the meeting.
- The General Coordinator will collect additional information on the EU's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and share it with researchers via e-mailing list.
- A Conference of Ministers of 17 countries and Members of the Commission of the European Communities established UREKA in 1985. There is a possibility to get financial support for projects from UREKA. Some information is available on their web page at <http://www.eurekanetwork.org>. Dr. Aynur-Erkan Gurel, Ege University Turkey and Dr. Eleni Tsaliki, Cotton and Industrial Plants Institute, Greece offered to collect additional information on UREKA support and share with Network members.
- The meeting emphasized the need for bilateral and multilateral research projects among countries on the lines Bulgaria and Ege University in Turkey were having joint research projects.

- The ICAC representative briefed the meeting about the formation of the International Cotton Researchers Association (ICRA). The Interregional Cooperative Network on Cotton for the Mediterranean and Middle East Regions, like other networks, will work with the Chairman of ICRA for facilitating communications among researchers.
- Next meeting of the Network will be held in Egypt.