

REPORT

Workshop on “Enhancing the Capacity of COMCEC Member States in Wheat Production” (İzmir, 15-16 January 2013)

1. The Workshop on “Enhancing the Capacity of COMCEC Member States in Wheat Production” was held on 15-16 January 2013 in İzmir (Menemen), Turkey.
2. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Masum BURAK, Directory General, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of the Republic of Turkey.
3. The Workshop was attended by the representatives from the following OIC Member States:
 - Arab Republic of Egypt
 - Islamic Republic of Mauritania
 - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
 - Libya
 - People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria
 - Sultanate of Oman
 - Republic of Gabon
 - Republic of Niger
 - Republic of Indonesia
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Republic of Turkmenistan
4. In addition to the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO) the representatives of the following international organizations attended to the Workshop;
 - Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)
 - Islamic Development Bank (IDB)
 - United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
 - International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)
 - International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT)

(The list of participants is attached in Annex-I).
5. The Meeting has agreed on the following agenda items:
 - Opening
 - Current Situation in Wheat Production
 - Inputs and Resource Utilization
 - Climate Change and Its Effect on Wheat Production
 - Wrap-Up and Closing Session

6. At the outset, in his opening address, Mr. BURAK welcomed the participants to the Workshop. Mr. BURAK pointed out that wheat is an important source of income for many developing countries, including the COMCEC Members. Mr. BURAK also highlighted the significance of certified seed for improving yield in the cultivated areas in our region. Furthermore, H.E. BURAK stated that 99 percent of the seed used by Turkish farmers has been certified. He also stated that in recent years Turkey has recorded remarkable achievements in agricultural research, including wheat research. In this respect, Mr. BURAK expressed that Turkey is ready to share its knowledge and experience with the Member Countries.

7. In his opening statement, Mr. Mehmet Metin EKER, Director General of the COMCEC Coordination Office, emphasized the importance of agriculture sector in ensuring food security in the COMCEC region. Mr. EKER stressed that agriculture is the main source of employment in many developing countries, including COMCEC Member States. Mr. EKER also underlined the great potential of COMCEC region in agricultural production and pointed out that the COMCEC region hosts a great number of high income food importing member countries as well as countries having a high agricultural production and food exports.

8. Afterwards, Mr. EKER mentioned about the cooperation efforts under the COMCEC for deepening cooperation in the domain of agriculture. He highlighted the significance of the COMCEC strategy, which has recently come into existence, for furthering the cooperation in this important sector. Mr. EKER informed the participants of the working groups envisaged by the strategy for its effective implementation. He expressed that the Working Groups will be regular technical experts' gatherings by which member-country experts will come together to elaborate the common issues thoroughly in the respective cooperation areas, share the good practices and learn from each others' experience. He also stated that the Working Groups will serve to produce and disseminate knowledge, develop a common language/understanding, and approximate policies in the cooperation areas.

First Working Session: *Current Situation in Wheat Production*

9. At the outset, Mr. Mazhar HUSSEIN, the representative of SESRIC, made a presentation on "Wheat production in OIC Member Countries: Prospects and Challenges". In his presentation Mr. Mazhar briefed the participants of wheat production in the COMCEC region. He underlined the challenges faced in wheat production in the COMCEC region. In his presentation, he highlighted that the COMCEC Members, in general, are net importer of wheat. He also set forth following recommendations for enhancing wheat production in the Member States; increasing arable land area, promoting national investments and facilitating transfer of knowledge and expertise.

10. Afterwards, Dr. Mesut KESER, the representative of ICARDA made a presentation on "R&D Impact on Wheat Production in West Asia and North Africa". In his presentation Mr. KESER stressed that although there has been no remarkable expansion in arable land areas in the world since 1960s, food demand has considerably grown mainly due to the increasing world population. In order to meet the increasing food demand in the Member states, he argued that there is a need to increase the productivity in the COMCEC region.

11. Following the presentations, the Member States shared their knowledge and experience in wheat production. The participants highlighted the importance of introducing new varieties in wheat production for increasing productivity. Furthermore, the representatives emphasized the necessity of increasing investments for enhancing wheat production in the COMCEC region. They also underlined that the cooperation and communication among the research centers of the member states need to be improved.

Second Working Session: Inputs and Resource Utilization

12. At the outset, the COMCEC Strategy, which was adopted by the 4th Extraordinary Islamic Summit held on 14-15 August 2012 in Mekkah Al-Mukarramah, was presented by Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office. Mr. KOÇ has mentioned about the content of the Strategy as well as its new instruments, namely Working Groups and Project Cycle Management (PCM), for its effective implementation.

Afterwards, Mr. Alexey Morgounov, the representative of CIMMYT, made a presentation on “Wheat production: Application of Modern Varieties and Technology”. In his presentation, Mr. Morgounov mentioned about the activities of CIMMYT in the field of wheat production. He also emphasized that the recent trend regarding the use of agricultural land for the production of biofuels has adversely affected the wheat production thereby food security in the world.

13. Following this presentation, the representatives of the member states have shared their country experiences with regard to the utilization of inputs and resources in wheat production. The participants highlighted the crucial role of efficient irrigation techniques in enhancing productivity in wheat production. In this regard, they stressed the significance of sharing know how and technology among the member states to increase yield.

Third Working Session: Climate Change and Its Effect on Wheat Production

14. At the beginning, Dr. Ayşegül AKIN, Assistant FAO (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization) Representative of the FAO Sub-Regional Office for Central Asia (FAO-SEC), made a presentation on “Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture and Country Experiences”. In her presentation Mrs. AKIN mentioned about the negative implications of climate change on agricultural sector as well as its effects on the living conditions of people engaging in agriculture. Afterwards, Mrs. AKIN informed the representatives about the FAO programs and projects towards mitigating the adverse effects of climate change on Agricultural production with a special emphasis on the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme.

15. Following this presentation, member states representatives shared their country experience in climate change and its implications on wheat production. The participants highlighted the importance of developing policy making capacity of the member states through technical cooperation and capacity building programs for mitigating the adverse effects of climate change in wheat production. Furthermore, the participants stressed the necessity of conducting analytical studies and need assessments to explore the COMCEC member countries’ potential in wheat production by taking into consideration the implications of climate change.

Wrap-Up and Closing Session:

16. In light of the deliberations and presentations, the Workshop has come up with the following recommendations. The Workshop:

- Highlighted the importance of enhancing institutional and human capacity in the member states for increasing wheat production in the COMCEC Region.
- Underlined that the cooperation and communication among the agricultural research centers of the member countries need to be strengthened.
- Underscored the necessity of conducting joint research programs and projects in wheat production among the member states.
- Emphasized that data collection, compilation and processing capacity of the member states should be improved to develop sound policies in Agriculture sector, including wheat.
- Highlighted the role of investments in enhancing wheat production in the COMCEC region and recommended the Member Countries to develop sound policies to encourage investments and develop joint investment programs and projects
- Underlined the significance of ensuring market efficiency for increasing seed trade among the Member States.
- Highlighted the importance of introducing new varieties in wheat production for increasing productivity as well as mitigating negative impacts of climate change.
- Welcomed the readiness of Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of the Republic of Turkey to share its experience in wheat production with the COMCEC Member Countries.
- Emphasized the significance of transfer of knowledge and expertise among the member countries in wheat production through capacity building programs and welcomed the willingness of SESRIC to organize capacity building programs for the interested Member Countries.