

TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION EXPERTS IN OIC MEMBER STATES

21-23 May 2013

IZMIR, REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

We, the agricultural extension experts participated in the Training Programme for Agricultural Extension Experts in OIC Member States, held in Izmir, Republic of Turkey on 21-23 May 2013,

Expressed our appreciation to the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) Director General for his visionary statement and overall efforts in scaling-up intra-OIC cooperation and collaboration on agricultural extension,

Commended the efforts of SESRIC in the implementation of the various capacity building programmes and projects within the framework of the OIC Vocational Education and Training Programme (OIC-VET); OIC Agriculture Capacity Building Programme (OIC-AgriCaB); OIC Cotton Training Programme (OIC-CTP); Environment Capacity Building (Environment-CaB) Programme; and Water Resources Management Capacity Building Programme (Water-CaB),

Expressed our appreciation to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), SESRIC, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of Turkey, Samsun 19 May University, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and SÜTAŞ Education Centre in Turkey, for their comprehensive presentations on Innovative Agricultural Extension and Consultancy Applications; Agricultural Extension Methods and Techniques; and International and Public-Private Cooperation on Agricultural Extension respectively,

Having considered the presentations and interventions on the experiences and best practices in their member states,

- **Acknowledge** that the most widely accepted definition of extension is ‘a conscious and interactive activity, which goes beyond consultancy, aimed to ‘teach’ and/or build capacity of people for problem solution while also developing leadership capacity for people who can play a leading role in the problem solution process’ and a participatory and pluralistic approach to empower people or farmer;
- **Highlight** the changing concept of agricultural extension towards ‘communication of novelties’ or ‘communication for rural novelties’ and **acknowledge** the need for using ‘extension’ and ‘publication’ concepts together;
- **Emphasize** the importance of improvement of short-term vocational courses and informal educational opportunities and **call upon** Member States to actively participate in the various OIC programmes within the framework of OIC-VET Programme, and to designate their respective focal points for these programmes, under

the aegis of SESRIC, in particular; the OIC Agriculture Capacity Building Programme (OIC-AgriCaB);

- **Recognise** the importance of the projects encouraging women entrepreneurship with an emphasis on improving employment of women employment in rural areas;
- **Recognise** the increasing trend towards decentralisation, privatisation, all-inclusiveness of agricultural extension services with an emphasis on gender;
- **Note** that women in rural areas experience a wide range of gender related problems and **underline** that there are lessons to learn from experience of OIC Member Countries' experience with successful projects;
- **Emphasize** the importance of institutional capacity, technology and research efficiency;
- **Note** the increasing usage of phones, smartphones and internet on the side of farmers and **recognise** the importance of cost effectiveness and easy-accessibility of e-learning materials and TV spots in reaching farmers and OIC agricultural extension experts;
- **Underline** the importance of SESRIC's 'AgriTV' project conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of Turkey;
- **Recognise** the importance of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in agricultural extension through the establishment of a nation-wide and systematic Geographical Information Systems (GIS);
- **Underline** the importance of farmer-to-farmer extension approaches;
- **Recognise** the importance of the research-extension-farmer linkage among the national agricultural research institutions, universities, NGOs, private sector and farmers; thus, **endorse** the participatory approach under the coordination of General Directorates of Agricultural Research;
- **Underline** the importance of embracing innovative strategies, improving extension service delivery, broadening the role of extension towards rural development and poverty alleviation;
- **Underline** the universities role and public-private partnerships in establishing training centres with an aim to promote agricultural extension
- **Recognise** the importance of agriculture advisory services delivered by the private sector;
- **Emphasize** the role of producer organisations and cooperatives in the agriculture with an aim to increase the quality of the agricultural production;
- **Underline** the significance of the credible and leader people in villages in the context of transmitting new ideas and methods in agricultural extension to the farmers;
- **Recognise** the importance and efficiency of demonstration of new agricultural techniques through field days with an aim to exemplify and increase the visibility of the results;
- **Note** that all OIC Member Countries declare their willingness bilateral and multilateral cooperation in regard with expert, material (newly developed species) and knowledge exchange;
- **Also note** that extension is just one element in the process and **endorse** that rural transformation should be the overall aim for developing countries;

- **Encourage** OIC Member Countries to apply international institutions/agencies for funding of agricultural extension projects;
- **Invite** OIC Member Countries to define their priorities and draft a realistic action-plan in the context of agricultural extension;
- **Recommend** OIC Member Countries to develop effective, result-oriented, realistic and long-term agricultural extension policies taking into account the accessibility, awareness-raising, objectivity, strategic and integrated approach, human-oriented understanding, multi-directional development, sustainability and social responsibility;
- **Request** SESRIC to include agricultural extension subjects in the on-going OIC-AgriCaB questionnaire and facilitate the process of exchange of experts, materials and information;
- **Request** SESRIC to assist agricultural institutions of OIC Member Countries in preparing national and international cooperative projects to be proposed to national and international organisations which fund agricultural extension projects;
- **Request** SESRIC to coordinate the network of agricultural extension units in OIC Member Countries through a group e-mail;
- **Request** SESRIC to coordinate the transfer of experience and knowledge in the field of agricultural extension in the OIC Member Countries.

22 May 2013, Izmir, Republic of Turkey