

The 13th RPC Meeting

Concept Paper on "Cooperation with ECO Member States in the field of Agriculture" by
Islamic Republic of Iran

(Tehran, 20-22 April, 2003)

Annex-VI

In the name of God

A) Aridity and drought

1- Drought

Taking into account the diverse soil and water resources, the specific climatic condition and the profound technical experience in drought combating available in the country, Islamic Republic of Iran proposed the establishment of a center for drought management research in the 26th FAO Regional Conference in Tehran (December 2001) for which the follow-up actions are still underway. In pursuance of the proposal, Islamic Republic of Iran has committed itself to actively participate in all related regional sessions and so far Iran is listed as one of the four countries elected to carry out regional projects on drought mitigation.

In the ECO's First Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture, Iran was elected to act as the focal point for drought management in the region. Accordingly, Islamic Republic of Iran has expressed its readiness to hold a workshop on the subject in August 2003. The Member States are requested to communicate their comments and suggestions to the sponsor, which would be of assistance to better organization of the workshop.

2- Desertification

State Forest and Rangeland Organization of I.R. Iran has organized International Training Course on combating desertification for ECO Member States to be held in Tehran from 28 April until 7 May 2003, with the collaboration of ECO Secretariat.

B) Fisheries

In order to boost regional cooperation and to step towards food security within the concept of sustainable development, Iranian Fisheries Company is willing to have cooperation with the Member States as regards research, training, fishing and aquaculture as well as exchange of information and species and carry out joint projects.

C) Plant Research

 **Biotechnology**

Agricultural Biotechnology Research Institute of Iran has suggested establishing a regional biotechnology network to help national research systems in the region to apply biotechnological tools in improving crop production. Agricultural Biotechnology Research Institute is capable of setting up a special laboratory in its site, which would, along with the network, provide a unique system for national research institutes to have access to relevant knowledge and biotechnology tools to solve their crop production problems.

Genetic Resources

Owing to longstanding agricultural activities and complex climatic condition, Iran is rich in plant and animal genetic resources. Being many plant and animal species' habitant, Islamic Republic of Iran proposes to establish a regional gene bank to preserve the genetic resources, which are national and at the same time regional wealth with the joint efforts of the Member States and specialized international organizations. Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture in Iran meets high scientific and research criteria and is ready to cooperate in this regard.

Pests and diseases control

Plant Pests & Diseases Research Institute is ready to cooperate in the following areas with the Member States:

- Biodiversity identification (fauna & flora) and creation of related data bank;
- Integrated pest management applicable to major crop (wheat, rice, sugar beet, cotton, maize, apple, pistachio, dates, pomegranate, ornamental plants, flowers and other crops) pests, namely mites and weeds as well;
- Extension of biological control of pests using parasitoid bee;
- Biological control by pests' pathogenic viruses;
- Extraction, purification and formulation of herbal extracts;
- Identification and synthesis of insects pheromones;
- Development of new varieties resistant to cereals diseases;
- Biological control of spider mite in green houses;
- Identification and management of virus borne plant diseases, particularly in potato, sugar beet, oily seeds and summer crops;
- Identification and management of citrus micro-plasma diseases;
- Identification and control management of plant pathogenic nematodes;
- Identification and creation of data bank for weeds by GIS.

D) Food and agricultural produce safety

Whereas most Member States are food producers and it deems necessary to strengthen their capabilities of producing safe and healthy food for local consumption and for regional and intra regional food trade by development of food standards approved at international level, the Islamic Republic of Iran suggests that the Member States with the help of international bodies, such as FAO, WHO, Codex Alimentarius Commission, run joint regional projects and hold workshops to institutionalize food safety culture.

Coordinating the food production throughout the country within the context of Food Codex Coordinating Council of Iran, I.R. Iran has gained valuable experiences, partly by execution of projects with FAO, and is geared up to actively cooperate in this framework.

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