

## **National Workshop on Wheat Landraces Collection, Conservation and Utilization in Turkey**

National workshop on Wheat Landraces Collection, Conservation and Utilization in Turkey conducted on 9 January 2013 in Ankara. The workshop was organized by FAO-SEC and International Winter Wheat Improvement Program (IWWIP). The workshop objective was to discuss the outcomes of the inventory of wheat landraces in Turkey, development of policy and technical recommendations for on-farm conservation, utilization and preparation of a work plan of the future activities in Central Asia sub-region.

More than 90 participants as researchers, farmers, extension specialists, university professors, government officials and international experts from Turkey, USA, UK, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, FAO, CIMMYT, ICARDA and NGOs attended the workshop.

Mr. Mustapha Sinaceur, FAO-SEC Sub-regional Coordinator and FAO Representative in Turkey, Dr. Ali Osman Sari, Deputy General Director of Agricultural Research and Policies, Dr. Hans Braun, Director of Wheat Programme, CIMMYT and Dr. Mesut Keser, ICARDA-Turkey opened the workshop, welcomed the participants and emphasized importance of landraces in food security and plant breeding.

Improving wheat production in particular by developing new varieties, better use of conserved germplasm, improving research and extension as well as wider enhancing capacity of small holder farmers is going to be very important. In this aspect landraces are not only a valuable source of germplasm, but also is an important source of nutrition.

Successful conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources requires efficient policies and legislation. Therefore, increasing awareness of national authorities is necessary to ensure full involvement in the process and for establishing functional mechanisms for successful conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources at national level. In this regard Dr. Kakoli Ghosh, FAO presented the global perspectives of Plant Genetic Resources conservation and utilization and challenged the development of the national strategies and programs.

Dr. Fatih Ozdemir, Bahri Dagdas International Agricultural Research Institute (BDIARI), presented the IWWIP activities on wheat landraces collection and characterization since 2009. However the first inventory of wheat landraces in Turkey were conducted in early 1920's by Dr. Mirza Gokgol. Information regarding history of wheat landraces cultivation in Turkey, outcomes of the study carried out by Dr. Mirza Gokgol, identification of wheat landraces with positive agronomic traits and their utilization in breeding programs were presented by Dr. Mesut Keser, ICARDA-Turkey.

Dr. Nigel Maxted from University of Birmingham, UK is one of the well-known researchers with huge experience on wheat landraces. He is very much interested in studying wheat landraces in Turkey and Central Asia countries. Thus, he also participated in the workshop and presented the national approaches to landrace conservation and use.

The Agriculture Research Institutes in Turkey have been collecting landraces in different regions of the country. In this regard Dr. Ayfer Tan from Aegean Agricultural Research Institute, shared his experience on wheat landraces collections and perspective of their conservation and utilization.

Dr. Mustafa Kan and Murat Kucukcongar as FAO National Consultants in cooperation with IWWIP and NARS carries out the inventory of wheat landraces in Turkey. They have presented the outcomes of the inventory and socio economic analysis of farming communities that grow wheat landraces.

Collected samples of wheat landraces are planted in the special nurseries with the purpose of studying, evaluation, characterization and description. Dr. Alex Morgounov, CIMMYT-Turkey presented the results of compared study of wheat landraces collected by Dr. Mirza Gokgol in 1920 and in 2009-2012. Dr. Marta Lopez, CIMMYT, presented preliminary genetic and phenotypic characterization of various collections of landraces from Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan.

Another a well-know scientist on wheat landraces that participated in the workshop was Dr. Calvin Qualset, UC Davis, USA. He presented and discussed the issues related to building incentives for on-farm conservation and use of crop landraces.

Farmers, NGOs and university perspectives on wheat landraces were presented in the workshop by Mr. Ilhan Koculu (Kars province), Mr. Gunesin Aydemir (Bugday Association) and Prof. Dr. Hakan Ozkan (Cukurova university) respectively. The discussion and recommendations were done after presentations.

FAO and IWWIP in coming years are planning to complete the inventory of wheat landraces in Turkey and carry out similar studies in other Central Asia countries. It is for this reason the researchers from Central Asia countries representing wheat breeding programs and the national genebanks were invited to the workshop to deliberate on the establishment of mechanism to strengthen regional cooperation. Therefore in the second day of the workshop a half-day meeting was conducted by a working group including the representatives of Central Asian countries (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), CIMMYT, ICARDA, researchers from Turkey and Dr. Calvin Qualset.

Workshop was a very successful event that allowed to review the situation on collection, conservation and utilization of wheat landraces in Turkey. The workshop participants emphasized importance of landraces as a precious genetic resources that should be conserved and efficiently utilized for food and breeding material. Wheat landraces widely grown by farmers who do not have access to modern varieties. Therefore, inventory of wheat landraces in Central Asia sub-region will remain as a priority area for close cooperation of FAO, CIMMYT and ICARDA with the National Agriculture Research System.