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منظمة الأغذية
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Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
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CONFERENCE

Thirty-third Session

Rome, 19-26 November 2005

PRESENTATION OF THE EDOUARD SAOUMA AWARD 2004-2005

1. The Twenty-Seventh Session of the FAO Conference in November 1993 adopted Resolution 2/93 and decided to institute, as a new permanent feature in FAO, an award to a national or regional institution which - in the course of the biennium preceding the Conference - has implemented with particular efficiency a project funded by the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). The award bears the name of Dr. Edouard Saouma and is directed towards the goals he served. It is conferred every biennium.
2. The elements of the Award are (i) a medal inscribed with the name of the recipient institution; (ii) a scroll describing its achievements; (iii) a cash prize of US\$ 25 000; (iv) travel to FAO headquarters in Rome by a representative of the winning institution to participate in the Award ceremony and to receive the award on behalf of the institution.

Selection of the Winning Institution

3. The Edouard Saouma Award Selection Committee, under the Chairmanship of the Director-General selects the Award winning institution; it comprises the Independent Chairman of the Council, the Chairman of the Programme Committee and the Chairman of the Finance Committee. The selection has been made from a short-list drawn up by an Ad Hoc inter-departmental Screening Committee, chaired by the Deputy Director-General and comprising the Assistant Directors-General of all the Headquarters Departments, the Director of the Field Operations Division, and the Chief TCOT as Secretary.
4. Nominations are submitted by national institutions to FAO Representatives or UNDP Resident Representatives, as appropriate, for endorsement and eventual submission to the technical Department in charge of the project's technical backstopping. FAO Representatives, FAO Regional Representatives or UNDP Resident Representatives, as appropriate, may also submit nominations directly to the technical department concerned.

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Conferment of the Award

5. The Award is presented by the Director-General at a special ceremony held at the beginning of each regular session of the Conference to the representative of the winning institution. The Award for the 2004-2005 biennium will be presented at the Thirty third Session of the FAO Conference, at a ceremony to be held on 19 November 2005.

6. This year, the Award is being granted to a national institution that excelled in the implementation of its TCP assistance providing an outstanding contribution.

7. The national institution nominated has had remarkable achievements in terms of impact, catalytic effects and follow-up. Among the nine nominations, this national institution stand out due to the commitment and enthusiasm with which it implemented and transformed an initially modest contribution by the Organization's Technical Cooperation Programme into a success that well exceeds the amount invested by FAO.

8. The performance of this project has been outstanding in terms of efficiency of project implementation as well as impact and catalytic effects. The personal commitment and enthusiasm of the Director and the staff of this institution has been vital for the achievements of the project and is at the origin of its success, not only in terms of immediate objectives but also with regard to the sustainability of its achievements.

Instituto de Investigaciones en Fruticultura Tropical (IIFT), Cuba

(TCP/CUB/0065 (A) – Recuperación de los Frutales Tropicales)

9. Despite having ideal agricultural conditions, for a number of years the Cuban fruit sector experienced serious deterioration, with a significant decline in planted areas and in production levels. The limited experience at field level in modern and sustainable fruit production technologies and the low availability of plant genetic resources and quality planting materials were identified as the main underlying causes for the limited impact of government efforts to reverse this trend.

10. FAO assistance was requested and a TCP project was launched to strengthen national capacity to increase production and availability of fruits for both internal consumption and possible export. The project enabled the rehabilitation of 16 nurseries as well as 725 hectares of plantation and three germplasm collections. It also supported the establishment of eight new pilot orchards and nine additional germplasm collections. In total, 230 producers and 103 experts were trained in selected production and propagation technologies as well as in nursery management and two manuals on fruit crop propagation and non-traditional fruit species were produced. Farmers and technicians quickly adopted the new techniques enabling production of two million fruit plants and 1 500 tons of fruit for national consumption.

11. IIFT's outstanding motivation and efficiency in carrying out coordination and organizational tasks and in using project resources were key elements for the timely and successful implementation of field activities, despite the losses caused by Hurricane Michelle. The Institution demonstrated a high level of commitment, complementing external training activities with its own resources.

12. The Institution has continued to put the project recommendations into practice. The established pilot orchards are being used for training activities as well as providing vegetative material. The Ministry of Agriculture assigns annually US\$300 000 for plant production and is expanding the project activities to other areas. The Government is continuing with the introduction of species with a potential for internal consumption or export and is also working on the post harvest handling of fruit.

13. Through its high level of integration within government policies and strategies for tropical fruit production, and based on the sustained commitment of IIFT, the project has played the desired catalytic role in the reactivation of the fruit industry. It enabled a production increase of 88 thousand tonnes between 2001 and 2003, the establishment of 7 682 hectares of new plantations with the most advanced technologies, the creation of 3 800 new positions of employment and increased farmers' revenues.