

The 26th Technical Committee Meeting of CIRDAP held in Kabul, Afghanistan.

The Twenty-Sixth meeting of CIRDAP Technical Committee was held at Hotel Intercontinental, Kabul, Afghanistan from 11 to 14 December 2010.

The inaugural ceremony of the meeting was held at Pamir Hall of Hotel Intercontinental on 11th December 2010. His Excellency Mr. Jarullah Mansoori, Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, inaugurated the function. Deputy Ministers Mr. Wais Ahmed Barmak, and Eng. Atiqullah Khawasi, of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan graced the occasion. Mr. Mohammed Golam Quddus, Secretary, Rural Development and Cooperatives Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD&C), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and Chairperson of 27th CIRDAP Executive Committee (EC- 27) graced the inaugural session as special guest and attended in the technical sessions of TC-26.

TC members from CIRDAP Member Countries (CMCs) except Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam attended the meeting. Professor Dr. Y. Kaida, IRD Expert (Japan), and representatives from several development partners such as World Bank, European Union (EU), JICA, UNDP, Embassy of Iran, etc attended the inaugural programme. Besides, High Government Officials from the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Afghanistan Institute of Rural Development (AIRD) and representatives from the Civil Society Organization (CSOs) also attended the inaugural session.

His Excellency Mr. Jarullah Mansoori, Minister of MRRD and Chief Guest, welcomed the delegates and participants to Kabul, which is the historic capital of Afghanistan. While thanking CIRDAP for organizing CIRDAP policy body meeting for the first time in Afghanistan, he reaffirmed the commitment of the Government of Afghanistan to the objectives of CIRDAP. He outlined some of the steps initiated over the last ten years in Afghanistan for rural development and explained the formidable challenges faced in carrying forward through the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the Comprehensive Rural Development Approach. He said that the emerging scenario demands new initiatives, policies

and programs. He expected AIRD would take up several policy research, evaluation and impact studies, and capacity building and skill development programs. Outlining the apex role to be assigned to AIRD, he called upon CIRDAP and CMCs to actively participate, collaborate and cooperate by exchanging the professional and technical talents available in the CMCs. He called upon the CMCs to broaden and intensify the cooperation between Afghanistan and CMCs and acknowledged the support received from CIRDAP and NIRD. He also thanked the international community for their support and impressed upon them to generously continue the support for the institutional development of AIRD.

Mr. Mohammed Golam Quddus, Secretary, RDCD of the Government of Bangladesh and Chairperson EC-27 expressed appreciation to the Government of Afghanistan for excellent support in hosting the meeting. He commended the past and on going contribution of CIRDAP in the field of rural development and poverty alleviation. He strongly endorsed the recommendations of the EC-27 Sub-Committee and suggested all CLIs/CMCs consider for undertaking one research/action research and one training programme each in collaboration with CIRDAP. He reiterated his Government's generous support in building the International Conference Centre. He urged upon all CMCs to provide state of the art facilities so that it becomes a symbol of regional solidarity and cooperation of 15 member countries.

While welcoming the delegates, Dr. Durga P. Paudyal, Director General, CIRDAP provided a brief account of the activities of CIRDAP and expressed his hope for further enhancing cooperation and collaboration among the member countries. He expressed his appreciation to the Government of Afghanistan particularly the MRRD for hosting TC-26 Meeting for the first time in Afghanistan.

DG, CIRDAP lauded the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan for rebuilding the local institution and wished CIRDAP to join hands for providing support to MRRD and AIRD in their endeavor. He expressed his hope that the Government of Afghanistan would consider the proposal submitted by CIRDAP on 'Development of Participatory Local Governance System in Afghanistan'.

Citing the findings of the CIRDAP Evaluation Report, DG, CIRDAP expressed his hope that strengthening the capacity of CLIs may improve the professional services to rural development policies and programmes in the respective countries. In this context, he appreciated the Strategic Planning Workshop of AIRD being planned after the TC Meeting where TC members from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and IRD expert were invited. Mr. Abdul Rahman Shekib, Acting Executive Director of AIRD extended vote of thanks. He thanked the Honorable Minister, Deputy Ministers, Ministry of RRD and Secretary RDCD, Government of Bangladesh for sparing their valuable time to grace the occasion. He also thanked CIRDAP for choosing Afghanistan as venue of the TC-26 Meeting.

At the business session Mr. Abdul Rahman Shekib, Acting Head of AIRD, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development MRRD was unanimously elected as the chairperson of TC-26. His name was proposed by the delegate from Pakistan and was seconded by the delegates from Nepal and Srilanka.

The newly elected Chairperson of TC-26 took over the charge and thanked the delegates for electing him. He requested for their active support during his tenure of office and also assured that he would make all out efforts to make his tenure a success.

The main agendas for discussion during the meeting were:

- Follow up action on the suggestions of the 25th Technical Committee Meeting (TC-25),
- Presentation of the EC-27, GC-17, Dhaka Declaration and EC-27 Sub-Committee Report,
- Presentation of Director General's Report on CIRDAP,
- Presentation of the recommendations of CIRDAP Evaluation Committee (CEC) and the issues raised by EC/GC during the last meeting, thereof.
- Discussion on the Programme Activities of CIRDAP Link Institutions, CLIs and identify scope of collaboration between CIRDAP and CLIs,
- Presentation of One research /action research project and one training programme from each CMC to be implemented in collaboration with CLIs,

- Discussion on ways and means for mobilization of corpus- fund for attaining self sufficiency of CIRDAP,
- Discussion on utilization of Regional Cooperation Fund (RCF) ,
- Discussion on enhancing linkage /networking between CIRDAP and CLIs in the areas of ICT,
- Discussion on completion of International Conference Center (ICC) with contribution from CIRDAP Member Countries (CMCs) as decided in the GC-17 Meeting, and
- Discussion and finalization of the outline of the Rural Development Report -2011

Following are the decisions made by the committee:

Decision 1/TC-26: CIRDAP Secretariat is requested to finalize the EC Sub-Committee Report by incorporating the comments and suggestions from CMCs, and place before the GC-17 Chairperson, through EC 27 Chairperson, as early as possible.

Decision 2/TC-26: TC members will give their ideas, as early as possible, for the preparation of the operational strategy of CEC recommendations. Based on these ideas DG CIRDAP will prepare agenda and working papers for the consideration of the next EC/GC meetings in Tehran, Iran.

Decision 3/TC-26: Fiji, in collaboration with CIRDAP, will prepare a proposal for a baseline study of the Integrated Rural Development Framework (IRDF) and a feasibility study to establish a national rural development institute in Fiji. Once the fund is available, the study will be conducted jointly by Fiji and CIRDAP.

Decision 4/TC-26 CLIs will consider one project for CIRDAP-CLI collaboration while preparing their annual calendar.

Decision 5/TC-26: CIRDAP, in consultation with AIRD, will prepare a project proposal for providing services to ongoing RD programs of Afghanistan. After interacting with the donors in Kabul, AIRD will convene a meeting of CIRDAP, donors and AIRD for funding. An appropriate Steering Committee may also be constituted to operationalise the purpose.

Decision 6/TC-26 CIRDAP should utilize the fund received from the six countries as envisaged for demonstrating results so that the remaining CMCs will be convinced to contribute to the fund.

Decision 7/TC-26 CIRDAP should prepare a two years plan highlighting cost-benefit analysis of the money so far accumulated for RCF and present in the next EC/GC meeting.

Decision 8/TC-26 The Government of Bangladesh is requested to consider providing the minimum amount of support to make the International Conference Centre functional so that it can be used.

Decision 9/TC-26: The Meeting selected “Comparative Assessment of Decentralization in CIRDAP Member Countries” as the theme for the RDR-2011 with the following time frame:

- i. Country reports received by CIRDAP- February/March-2011
- ii. Analysis and preparation of Overview paper by CIRDAP- April-June 2011
- iii. Publish the reports- July 2011
- iv. RDR-2011 will be presented in the Regional Policy Dialogue in August 2011 in Tehran

The delegate from Sri- Lanka offered in the meeting of its interest and willingness to host the twenty-seventh regular meeting of the Technical Committee of CIRDAP in Colombo. At the conclusion of the meeting the report of the TC-26 meeting was adopted by the Technical Committee and circulated among the participants.