



PHNOM PENH, Cambodia – Thirty-one scholars under the Southeast Asian Upland Agriculture Fellowship project of SEARCA and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada took part in the Third IDRC-SEARCA Annual Fellowship plus Conference-Workshop on 16-18 January 2016 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The Conference was the third in a series of annual roving conferences under the project and was held in conjunction with the Seventh International Conference on Environmental and Rural Development (7th ICERD 2016) hosted by the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA). Among the 11 IDRC-SEARCA scholars who presented their research, 2 were awarded the “Excellent Paper Award”—Mr. Bouavonh Biachampah from Chiang Mai University (CMU), Thailand and Ms. Chheun Sreyneang from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

Themed “Environmentally-friendly Agricultural and Rural Development,” the conference gathered nearly 550 participants from over 15 countries to discuss suitable and effective strategies for sustainable rural development taking into account the agricultural and environmental aspects in developing countries. It featured 84 oral presentations under four thematic areas, namely: (1) Education for Sustainable Rural Development, (2) Rural Development, (3) Environmental Management, and (4) Agricultural Systems; poster papers; and a field tour to Kampong Speu Province in southwest Cambodia.

Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA’s Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development, delivered a message on behalf of SEARCA Director Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. during the opening program. She also served as co-chair for the session on Education for Sustainable Development. The scholars were also joined by the project’s Advisory Committee members, namely: Dr. Prasit Wangpakapattanawong, Professor of CMU; Dr. Seng Mom, Vice Rector of RUA; Dr. Vo-Tong Xuan, Rector of Nam Can Tho University, Vietnam; Dr. Oscar B. Zamora, Professor Emeritus of UPLB; and Dr. Percy E. Sajise, SEARCA Senior Fellow. Dr. Prasit, Dr. Mom, Dr. Zamora, and Dr. Sajise also chaired other sessions of the conference.

After the two-day international conference, a special session was held on 18 January 2016 where another 20 IDRC-SEARCA graduate scholars presented their thesis proposals before the Advisory Committee members. Dr. Somsak Srisontisuk, International Program Head and Director of the Master of Rural Development Management program of Khon Kaen University, Thailand, served as Resource Person for the whole-day session and provided his recommendations for the

improvement of the scholars' research proposals. Another Advisory Committee member, Dr. Silinthone Sacklokhham, Vice Dean of the National University of Laos, and Dr. Annie Wesley, IDRC's Senior Program Specialist, also joined this special session.

The Third IDRC-SEARCA Annual Fellowship plus Conference-Workshop and the 7th ICERD 2016 was co-sponsored and co-organized by SEARCA, IDRC, RUA, International Society of Environmental and Rural Development (ISERD), Institute of Environmental Rehabilitation and Conservation (ERECON), and the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS).

See photo gallery
[here](#)



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