A considerable number of IPC members participated in the first Global Conference of Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) held in Montpellier, France, March 28-31, 2010. It was attended by more than 800 participants, coming from more than 100 countries and representing a diverse set of stakeholders (international researchers working in international and national research institutions as well as universities, research administrators, policy makers, farmers’ organizations, civil society organizations, etc.). What is the significance of this big event?

The GCARD had already received international recognition in advance of the March event: the July 2009 L’Aquila G8 Declaration called for the promotion of agricultural research and development as one component of G8 global food security efforts. The Declaration highlighted the role of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and emphasized the importance of partnerships. The G8 promoted the revitalization of the Global Forum for Agricultural Research for Development (GFAR) so as to ensure effective and inclusive stakeholder participation (e.g. farmers organizations, civil society, private sector) in determining research priorities, and to strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of all agricultural research efforts, including those of the CGIAR and national and regional research systems. This first GCARD was subsequently organized by GFAR, in close collaboration with the CGIAR.

The critical role which agricultural research must play to fight hunger and poverty is now widely recognized, despite the fact that there are a range of views on certain research and development issues, from GMOs, to pesticides, to the role of smallholders. Likewise, there is a wide recognition of the need to go beyond “business as usual” in agricultural research matters. This particularly applies to the international centers of the CGIAR, whose efforts should be better integrated in a global strategy involving many partners, particularly National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) of the developing countries and regional fora of NARS, such as the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA). In addition, I personally (continued on page 4)
In the 2009 G8 “L’Aquila” Joint Statement on Global Food Security, leaders affirmed their support for country-led food security strategies implemented at the country and regional level. Given the small size, landlocked geography, and lack of infrastructure in many African countries, regional integration is a key component in the effort to achieve food security on the continent. On March 2, 2010, IPC partnered with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States to host a discussion on this topic.

IPC member emeritus Ann Tutwiler of the U.S. Department of Agriculture spoke about the role of regional integration in the implementation of the U.S. government’s food security initiative, Feed the Future. She highlighted areas where the U.S. could be involved on a regional level, including standards, tariffs and infrastructure. Paul Jourdan of the South African Regional Spatial Development Program, Vivien Foster of the World Bank, Bill Lane of Caterpillar, and Aly Abou-Sabaa of the Africa Development Bank discussed challenges to building infrastructure in Africa, particularly in order to connect farmers to markets and highlighted solutions to improve infrastructure going forward.

Copies of the presentations can be found on the IPC website at http://www.agritrade.org/events/AfricaEvent.html.

IPC Releases Papers Under ICTSD-IPC Platform on Climate Change

The latest paper released under the ICTSD-IPC Platform on Climate Change, Agriculture and Trade, The Role of International Trade in Climate Change Adaptation projects that food and agricultural trade flows are expected to increase substantially in a context of changing agricultural productivity around the world resulting from climate change. Trade has the potential to help counteract this effect by delivering agricultural goods to areas experiencing productivity declines. The role of trade as an adaptation tool becomes even more important in light of recent scientific studies putting the effects of carbon fertilization in question. The authors warn, however, that it would be unwise to rely solely on trade to help us adjust to climate change, and the international community must also importantly commit to increased and sustained investment in agricultural productivity.

Outlining the challenges that climate change presents in particular to developing countries, the Platform paper Climate Change and Developing Country Agriculture: An Overview of Expected Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation Challenges, and Funding Requirement, examines how agricultural producers might adapt by diversifying into new products, methods of production and new tradable services. The paper also examines the scope for climate change finance and proposes a linkage with Aid for Trade finance, while it stresses the need for supplemental funding for climate change adaptation needs.

These papers are both available on the IPC website at http://www.agritrade.org/events/Platform_001.html.
The ICTSD-IPC Platform held a roundtable on Climate Change and Food Security, February 24 in Paris at the margin of the OECD Agricultural Ministerial, in order to take stock of the Copenhagen Summit and of next steps for the climate change and agriculture agenda. UNFCCC negotiators explained that agriculture was discussed under both pillars of the climate change negotiations. The Ad Hoc Working Group on the Kyoto Protocol (AWG KP) includes a focus on land use, land use change and forestry. The status quo for agriculture soils (grazing land management and cropland management) with the question of voluntary vs. mandatory accounting is still to be decided (for Annex I Parties only). A more comprehensive accounting in the future (including land-based accounting) may be considered, and the scope of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which at present is limited to afforestation and reforestation activities, might possibly be expanded to include soil carbon activities. Agriculture is featured in the other pillar – the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Collaborative Action (AWG LCA), whose preamble notes the important role of food production systems in mitigation and adaptation efforts. On mitigation, the text calls upon parties to promote and cooperate in research and development, including transfer of technologies, practices and processes that control, reduce or prevent GHG emissions, especially those that improve the efficiency and productivity of agricultural systems in a sustainable manner and those that could support adaptation, thereby contributing to safeguarding food security and livelihoods. Moreover, the text calls upon the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to undertake a work program on agriculture. Whereas the Copenhagen Accord did not include any specific references to agriculture, Parties agreed to resume negotiations under both pillars – the AWG KP and AWG LCA.

Simon Upton, Chairperson of the OECD Roundtable on Sustainable Development, provided an overview of the new Global Research Alliance on Agricultural GHGs, whose formation had been agreed to in Copenhagen by 21 countries, although it is distinct from the UNFCCC process. Participants of this alliance will share their knowledge and research efforts; identify gaps in the research portfolio; and leverage new resources for collaborative projects. The organizational sectors of focus for the research should be arable systems, rice, intensive and extensive livestock, and collaboration with both the private sector and the CGIAR is foreseen.

IPC Comments on the Brazil-US Cotton Dispute

In April 2010, the United States and Brazil reached an agreement on the longstanding WTO cotton dispute. This is good news, as the global economy will not be burdened with further trade restrictions in the form of Brazilian countermeasures. The settlement also shows that the WTO dispute settlement system is still functioning, despite the current impasse in the Doha Round negotiations.

As IPC Chairperson Carlo Trojan states, “A negotiated compensation settlement is always preferable to trade restrictions...[but] the ideal resolution to a WTO dispute is compliance by the guilty party with the panel’s findings.”

Should the settlement translate into substantial changes to the US farm bill, the settlement could be good news for African cotton producers as well. IPC Vice Chairperson Marcelo Regunaga explains: “the cotton initiative, which the Africans were able to incorporate in the Doha Round...remains stuck.”

“This situation exemplifies how difficult it is for LDCs to benefit from the dispute settlement process.” IPC member and Executive Director fo the IDEAS Center Nicolas Imboden says.

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Although total funding increased significantly...the share of 'core funding' has declined steadily.