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78<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting ICAC, Brisbane, Australia

December 2-6, 2019

### **Official declaration of the International Cotton Researchers Association (ICRA)**

The International Cotton Researchers Association (ICRA) dates back to 2012, when it was created under the initiative of ICAC, to compensate for the lack of a specifically dedicated international cotton research institute or program. Among its objectives, ICRA works to promote the interaction between cotton scientists in the world.

By this declaration, ICRA is happy to emphasize that the close cooperation with ICAC keeps on. ICRA took advantage of the 8th meeting of the Asian Cotton Research and Development Network, remarkably organized in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, under the auspices of ICAC, to formerly distribute the medal of the ICRA award to young cotton scientist. This time, the award went to two winners, Dr. Nadanathangam Vigneshwaran of the Indian Central Institute for Research on Cotton Technology in Mumbai and Dr. Chengzhen Liang of the Biotechnology Research Institute in Beijing, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences. The medals were distributed *in absentia* as both winners could not make themselves available to get benefit of the travel grant provided by ICRA so as to take part and make a presentation to the conference. ICRA urges the participants in this plenary meeting to convey to researchers working on cotton the message about ICRA and its efforts to acknowledge the contribution of young scientists.

Close cooperation between ICRA and ICAC will materialize again in the 7<sup>th</sup> World Cotton Research Conference to be held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, October 3-7 2020. This event will provide up-to-date information on cotton research breakthroughs. It is desirable that cotton researchers from all ICAC countries be represented, particularly from developing countries. ICRA and ICAC provide partial sponsorship for travel to each WCRC, but additional financial support is required so as to fully reach the target of developing-country participation. It is suggested that cotton sectors of the respective countries provide the needed support.

ICRA is launching an initiative to promote the exchange of information on existing germplasm collections. ICRA is not suggesting changes in ownership or the rules by which gene banks are currently managed in the respective countries. As will be emphasized in the presentation of Dr. Michel FOK during the Third Open Session related to the issue of germplasm exchange, the lack of information is a major reason for the current low level of germplasm exchange. The new initiative arises from the fact that genetic materials are preserved in replication in various countries, but no single country can comprehensively evaluate each event under various biotic and abiotic stresses. International cooperation is the way to achieve a more comprehensive assessment of existing germplasms. Pakistan and France have already decided to join the new initiative; the participation of other countries is needed and welcomed.

Thank you for your attention.

For more information or inquiry, please email to ICRA Secretariat: [icracotton.pk@gmail.com](mailto:icracotton.pk@gmail.com)