



Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development of the Coconut Industry

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The XLV APCC COCOTECH Meeting and Coconut Exhibition 2012 is being organized by APCC Secretariat and the Coconut Development Board, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. We are indeed truly grateful to the Coconut Development Board and the Ministry of Agriculture together with the support of the State Government of Kerala and other related Departments of the Government of India for providing the host facilities for the Conference.

The theme of the XLV APCC COCOTECH Meeting and Coconut Exhibition for CY 2012 is “**Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development of the Coconut Industry**”. This meeting covers a comprehensive range of technical sessions/topics on the success stories of model coconut farmers and small to medium-scale coconut processors/

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entrepreneurs. New technologies and R&D updates on coconut crop improvement, coconut based farming systems, coconut agronomy and nutrition, coconut product development and value-addition, including developments in marketing coconut products in the domestic and export markets will be discussed. Issues and topics which are related to the global financial crisis, climate change as well as the carbon credit market will also be discussed in the XLV APCC COCOTECH Meeting.

Experts from the scientific field and from international R and D institutions are invited as resource speakers. Representatives from the private sector are also invited to present their coconut company profile and the new products that they have developed, their coconut processing technologies, newly developed or improved coconut processing machineries/equipment, quality control

measures adopted including organic and fair trade certifications, and their marketing strategies in response to the resurgence of the market demand of coconut-based products.

During the 45th APCC COCOTECH Meeting/Conference, a Coconut Exhibition will also be held in the hotel-venue. Various coconut products, posters and publications from the host country (India) and all APCC member countries will be displayed. Potential buyers and sellers of coconut products, and suppliers of coconut processing machineries and equipment can also meet and discuss during the Conference.

We pursue the theme of the 45th APCC COCOTECH Conference on “Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development of the Coconut Industry” in the context of the stagnating agricultural growth in recent years. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has indicated that agricultural growth has stagnated in recent years, with a serious decline in agricultural investment, and depletion as well as degradation of natural resources in the face of continued population growth. Migration towards urban areas and cities has also contributed to a lack of manpower resources, especially labor in the farming sector. Climate change has likewise made serious impacts on agriculture particularly in areas vulnerable to natural disasters. The volatility of prices of commodities has also contributed to the food crisis and nutritional insecurity.

Under these circumstances, all countries especially the developing nations in Asia and the Pacific Region, must exert concerted efforts to ensure food security and nutrition by raising agricultural productivity and alleviating poverty while protecting the natural resources and the environment. We must focus on technologies and good agricultural practices to boost productivity in major food crops, fisheries and livestock. These should include cereals,

vegetables, fruits, root crops, vegetable oil crops like coconut, and others.

In the coconut sector, there is a need to increase productivity with a strong advocacy for a systematic, well-funded replanting program in all coconut growing countries, to replace senile palms while at the same time promote crop intensification, crop diversification through intercropping and value-added products. The key objectives are to increase coconut yields and farm productivity, enable the farmers to produce nutritious food for their families, raise farm family income, improve market access and support agri-business.

Growth in the coconut sector must be inclusive and should ensure that all the stakeholders, especially the smallholder-farmers and their families reap the benefits of its growth through capacity building, appropriate technologies, better prices, market access, efficient marketing schemes, higher income, enhanced food security and improved nutrition. There is a need to develop capacity and enhance the knowledge and skills of the coconut farmers and small/medium-scale entrepreneurs. Appropriate technical support and participatory development policies and programs must be designed and implemented for the benefit of all stakeholders.

While there is a need to cope with the impact of climate change, appropriate green technologies and good agricultural practices must be shared to promote strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as ensure green growth and sustainable development of the coconut industry. It is also important to highlight the role of coconut palms as a carbon sink. Thus, efforts to pursue massive coconut replanting and crop intensification as well as crop diversification must be supported.

Indeed, inclusive green growth and sustainable development of the coconut industry should be our hope, our mission, and our strength of purpose.

