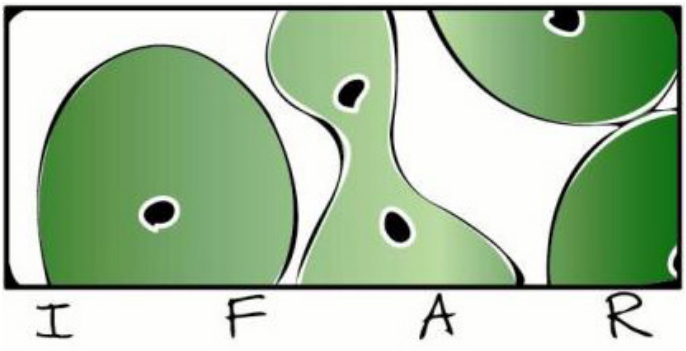

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IFAR News Release

Washington, DC. June 11, 2009

Twelve promising scientists from developing countries won an opportunity today to strengthen their research skills, while addressing some of world agriculture's most pressing challenges.

Each researcher will receive a grant of US$11,000 from IFAR to work on issues ranging from the characterization of crop and animal genetic resources at the molecular level to crop improvement with the aid of biotechnology and better management of diseases, weeds, soils and agroforestry species.

IFAR, a foundation that promotes scientific excellence through awards and partnerships, offers grants each year to enhance the professional growth of developing country scientists. Nominees for these awards are sponsored by one or more of the Centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

One of the grants is the Ravi Tadvalkar Memorial Scholarship, which is awarded to the youngest female scientist among each year's IFAR grant recipients. This year's winning scientists represent nine countries of Africa and East and South Asia.

Selected from a pool of 45 nominees, the 2009 IFAR award recipients were chosen based on the careful evaluation and recommendations of an international panel of reviewers, with the endorsement of the IFAR Board of Directors.

The names and nationalities of the 2009 winners of the IFAR grants are indicated below, together with brief descriptions of their research with a collaborating CGIAR Center:

Stephen Olasunkanmi Taiwo, Nigeria
Improving rice productivity in inland valleys through on-farm and experiment station research on weed management. Africa Rice Center (WARDA)

Gustav Komla Mahunu, Ghana
Enhancing rice production through new knowledge that better enables scientists to develop (and farmers to choose) varieties able to compete with weeds. Africa Rice Center

Henry Kaweesi, Uganda
An assessment of the impact of in situ conservation of bananas in eastern Africa. Bioversity International

Marian Dorcas Quain, Ghana
Use of molecular markers to better understand the genetic diversity of plantain, make its conservation more efficient and advance plantain improvement. Bioversity International

Jeremiah Mosioma Okeyo, Kenya
Understanding the effect of long-term conservation tillage (i.e., reduced or no tillage) on soil physical properties under experimental conditions in the subhumid tropics. International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT, its Spanish acronym)

Syed Ajijur Rahman, Bangladesh
A village-level study on the evolution of agroforestry in upland areas – from shifting cultivation to more stable farming systems. Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

Xuecai Zhang, China
Integration of molecular marker-assisted selection into conventional maize breeding for more efficient genetic improvement. International Center for Maize and Wheat Improvement (CIMMYT, its Spanish acronym)

Tameru Alemu, Ethiopia
Identifying the main environmental factors that influence the development of diseases in potato. International Potato Center (CIP, its acronym in Spanish)

Bosibori Swari Bett, Kenya
Development of an efficient system for in vitro micro-propagation of disease-free planting materials of sweetpotato, so they can be disseminated more widely to farmers. International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)

Marie-Chantal Niyuhire, Burundi
Documentation of dissemination and adoption of improved bean varieties on the basis of rural household and market surveys. CIAT

Neena Amatya Gorkhali, Nepal
Characterization of the genetic diversity of goats at the molecular level to help guide the use of this diversity for livestock improvement. International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

Nashwa Mahmoud Adel-Atti
Improving the disease-resistance and quality of Nile tilapia in acuaculture, using new diagnostic techniques and native dietary supplements. WorldFish Center