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## Developing Country Scientists Win New Support for Agricultural Research Aimed at Bolstering Food Security and Coping with Climate Change

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 11, 2010)—Thirteen promising scientists from developing countries have won an opportunity 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 – such as drought, heat and salinity tolerance, resistance to shifting disease and insect pressures, and more efficient management of water resources – which are central for confronting the challenges of food security and climate change in Asia and Africa.

“We’re delighted to support such a strong body of relevant, problem-solving research,” said Ren Wang, Executive Secretary of the CGIAR Fund.

IFAR 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).

Among the grants are the Wilfried Thalwitz Memorial Scholarship, established in memory of CGIAR Chairman Wilfried Thalwitz by his family, and 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 10 countries of sub-Saharan Africa and Central and Southeast Asia.

Selected from a pool of 40 nominees, the 2010 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 2009 winners of the IFAR grants are listed below, together with brief descriptions of the research they are conducting in collaboration with a CGIAR Center:

### **Africa Rice Center**

***Garba Hadiza Anaroua, University of Niamey, Niger:*** Combating bacterial blight, a major disease of irrigated rice, through a better understanding of blight epidemics and the identification of resistance genes.

***Ruth Omotola Onasanya, Federal University of Technology Akure, Nigeria:*** Enhancing the sustainability of genetic resistance to rice yellow mottle virus, a major

disease of the crop that is indigenous to Africa, based on characterization of the virus population in southern Nigeria.

***Drissa Sereme, National Environment and Agricultural Research Institute, Burkina Faso:*** Identifying sources of durable genetic resistance to the rice yellow mottle virus, which is a major constraint to intensification of rice production in West Africa.

### **Bioversity International**

***Siriphorn Jangsutthivorawat, Chiang Mai University, Thailand:*** Developing molecular marker techniques to aid the search for samples of banana wild relatives that need to be conserved for use in genetic improvement of the cultivated crop.

***Herbert Talwana, Makerere University, Uganda:*** Improving the management of a widespread and damaging species of root nematode that attacks banana in the East African highlands, based on a better understanding of the pest's genetic variability.

***Alganesh Tesema Gellaw, Ethiopian Institute of Biodiversity and Conservation Research:*** Evaluation of traditional wheat types for tolerance to drought as well as resistance to the major disease stem rust, with the participation of women farmers' groups.

### **International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)**

***Regina Mumbua Tende, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute:*** Introduction of genetic resistance to stem borer, a major insect pest of maize, into popular hybrids and varieties grown by Kenyan farmers.

### **International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)**

***Hala Mohamed Mustafa Elamein, Agricultural Research Corporation, Sudan:*** Evaluating the genetic variability of wheat lines, using molecular markers, for a variety of important traits, including heat and salinity tolerance.

### **International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)**

***Olusola Olukemi Odedara, University of Agriculture, Nigeria:*** Identifying potential virus threats to food legumes like cowpea and groundnut, which are a critical source of protein for African consumers, through the assessment of virus diversity in wild and weed plants of the Nigerian savanna.

***Aimé H. Bokonon-Ganta, Service de la Protection des Végétaux et du Contrôle Phytosanitaire, Benin:*** Enhancing mango production through the release of an indigenous parasitoid to achieve biological control of fruit flies, a dangerous pest of this economically important fruit crop.

### **International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)**

***Nadia Mohammed Osman, Central Veterinary Research Laboratories, Sudan:*** Building a local capacity to use molecular tools for surveillance and control of African animal trypanosomiasis, a parasitic disease that causes major losses of cattle.

## **International Water Management Institute (IWMI)**

***Sanjar Khodjaev, Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Melioration, Uzbekistan:***

Identifying ways to improve irrigation systems in Uzbekistan, with the aim of boosting wheat and cotton productivity, while reducing degradation of soil and water.

## **WorldFish Center**

***Phakapom Tanapisuti, Katsetsart University, Thailand:*** Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from aquaculture systems in Asia through the development of a new method for measuring their “carbon footprint.”

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**IFAR** is a results-oriented foundation that supports partnerships, collaboration and awards. Its mission is to recognize and foster scientific excellence involving the work of international agricultural research centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and their partners and to promote science through professional development, giving priority to Africa and South Asia.