Official Recommendation Letter n°2012-6

Collecting, conserving and breeding Dwarf coconut varieties from across the world within Latin America, the Caribbean and.

From 8th to 10th July 2012, the International Coconut Genetic Resources Network (COGENT) organized its 16th Steering Committee Meeting at Cochin, India. The Steering Committee and representatives from various stakeholders of the global coconut sector attending the meeting have endorsed the following international recommendation.

Considering that:

- Due to an increasing market for coconut water derived products, the most rentable coconut plantations are those of Dwarf varieties for providing coconut water. Brazil has developed advanced intensive cultivation methods.
- The future of coconut agriculture is believed to be in Dwarf varieties. At 10-years old, the trunks of Tall varieties and Dwarf x Tall hybrids often reach 4 m, when the trunks of Dwarf varieties are less than 1.5 m. Tall and hybrids varieties are more difficult to harvest, more dangerous, and less precocious than Dwarf varieties.
- Two distinct different dwarfism syndromes exist within the species: Dwarfs with thin stems and reduced boles (like Malayans), and dwarfs with thick stems and large boles resistant to cyclones (like Niu Leka). This second type remains insufficiently studied by scientists.
- Although some countries (India, Thailand, Philippines) succeeded in re-creating Dwarfs from Dwarf x Tall progenies, the genetic inheritance of the 2 dwarfism syndromes remains unknown.

COGENT recommends:

- The International Genebank for Latin America and Caribbean to focus on Dwarf introduction, conservation and improvement for the next 10 years.
• Launching an international breeding experiment testing new dwarf varieties, Dwarf x Dwarf hybrids, and F2 and F3 progenies of Dwarf x Dwarf hybrids in COGENT countries from Latin America and Africa.
• Private companies to be closely associated by hosting at least half of the field experiments under supervision of scientists from national institutions.

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