Official Recommendation Letter n°2012-7

Establishing an international multilocation coconut breeding experiment in Asia

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:

• COGENT gathers 39 member countries representing more than 98% of global coconut production, and hosting the 24 most significant ex situ coconut genebanks worldwide. Twelve country members and 10 genebanks are located in Asia.
• During the last 15 years, international coconut breeding experiments were launched in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean but not in Asia. Scientific collaboration and germplasm exchanges between Asian countries need to be significantly strengthened.
• Specific and crucial scientific questions must be addressed: many farmers are sowing seed-nuts harvested from Dwarf x Tall hybrids, and scientists have no idea of the value of this material; the genetic inheritance of the two Dwarfism syndromes existing in coconut remains unknown; Vietnamese farmers from the Mekong Delta have developed a method for reducing the growth of Tall coconut palms that could be useful to ex situ coconut genebanks worldwide.

COGENT recommends:

• Launching international breeding experiments in Asia that evaluate new varieties, including Hybrids, and Dwarf and Tall varieties as well as progenies of Dwarf x Tall hybrids.
• Assessing the method developed by Vietnamese farmers to reduce the vertical growth of the Tall-type coconut palms.
• Private companies to be closely involved by hosting at least half of the field experiments under supervision of scientists from national institutions.