

## **Introductory Remarks**

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**CABI**

**American and Caribbean Member Countries Regional Consultation**

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Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

Firstly, let me take this opportunity to thank our host, the Canadian government through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada officials – represented by the Deputy Minister, Dr Gilles Saindon and the Director of Research, Dr Michele Marcotte. Sincere thanks for helping us to organize this regional consultation. Welcome to you all our member country representatives and development partners – many of you have travelled far to be with us here so thank you for the commitment and support that you continue to give us. I would also like to thank my colleagues led by the CEO, Dr. Trevor Nicholls for the work that has been done to make this meeting a reality!

As you all know, CABI, is a membership organisation and so these meetings will be held with all our MCs in the other regions - in Asia in mid-October in China and in Africa in Botswana in February 2019 – so this is the first in the series of meetings.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

CABI's 110 year history is closely linked to this region. Canada, for example, has played a key role in CABI's development. We have had a long association through the former CIDA (now Global Affairs Canada), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), CFS (Canadian Forestry Service) and IDRC (International Development Research Centre). The first association goes back to 1911 when a financial contribution was made towards the establishment of the Bureau of Mycology. And just after the war, the Commonwealth Institute of Biological Control moved to Canada but later moved to Trinidad in 1962. All this was made possible by Canadian Government support.

Our CABI Europe Centre in Switzerland was initially set up in 1948 as a substation of the Commonwealth Bureau of Biological Control with Headquarters in Ottawa, influenced by Canada's needs. The Centre has been collaborating with Canadian institutions for over 70 years. The Canadian government also funded the establishment of biological control station buildings in Kenya, India, Pakistan and Trinidad. And a number of our other member country nationals (including myself) were trained through Canadian grants with CABI's support.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

My colleagues will be telling you more about our current work in the region but I thought I could just mention one or two:-

1. CABI was the Regional Executing Agency for the GEF funded IAS Project on, “Mitigating the Threats of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean” which was undertaken in the Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago. The project contributed to the development of IAS strategies and enhanced regional cooperation in the fight against IAS. Activities also contributed to raising awareness as to the threats of IAS and developed capacity to manage IAS. Recently another GEF funded Project has been approved for the Caribbean region - entitled, “Preventing COSTS of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in Barbados and the OECS Countries” in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, and St Vincent and the Grenadines. The project will strengthen IAS policies, build capacity, create awareness, foster regional cooperation and contribute to the development and implementation of best management practices for selected IAS.
2. We have also been involved in the development of guidelines for improved in-country preparedness against incursions of cocoa” pests funded by Mondelez International and the International Permanent Working Group for Cocoa Pests and Disease (2018). The aim of the project is to prepare technical guidelines for cocoa producing countries to help them prepare and respond more effectively in the event of a new pest or disease incursion.

3. And in the last 3 years, four weed biological control agents were approved and released in Canada based on work conducted at CABI Switzerland. We also hope to get permission from CFIA for the release of *Trissolcus japonicus* against the brown marmorated stink bug. If approved, this could be a major step forward in controlling this highly invasive pest.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The world around us continues to change and its expectations and demands on us, on our institutions and on our countries are increasing and becoming enormously complex. So we should regard this as a period of opportunity and to work more closely together. For example, the arrival in Africa in 2016 of Fall Armyworm, one of the Americas most damaging crop pests and recently in Asia, is a recent example of this complexity and challenge. Fall Armyworm is currently devastating maize in at least 44 African countries, placing at risk the food security of around 300 million people. CABI, through our new programme on Action on Invasives is supporting work in these countries to implement a response plan, drawing on the lessons from the Americas where Fall Armyworm originates.

With initial funding from DFID and DGIS and currently being piloted in Africa and Asia, the Action on Invasives Programme builds on the successful Plantwise Programme and is intended to be a unique Global Programme, that seeks to protect and improve livelihoods of millions of rural poor households affected by invasive species using new partnership

approaches to **Defend, Detect and Defeat** new invasions - this includes helping to build biosecurity capacity of countries to effectively monitor and manage specific priority invasive species.

So as has been in the past, this meeting provides an opportunity for our Member Countries to provide input into CABI's plans and thus own them but more importantly, serve as a mechanism for CABI to listen and engage directly with its membership. This will help to shape the revision of CABI Medium-term Strategy and so based on the priorities identified by you in 2015-16, we have decided to build more capabilities in the issues you identified. We believe these will help our member countries in their endeavour to achieve the SDGs."

At the last regional consultations, you mandated CABI to provide support in five priority areas, plus four cross-cutting areas in line with CABI's capabilities and donor's priorities:

The priority areas were:

1. Trade and market access
2. Knowledge management, communication & use
3. Food and nutrition security
4. Plant health systems
5. Biodiversity and ecosystem management (inclusive Invasives Species Management)

Cross-cutting issues

6. Capacity building and governance
7. Public-private partnerships
8. Women and youth empowerment
9. Support for monitoring, evaluation and impact analysis

During this meeting, we will therefore:

1. Review the progress made in addressing the priority areas identified during the last consultation
2. Identify the key emerging issues influencing and impacting on sustainable development nationally and regionally
3. Share country experiences and lastly,
4. Develop regional plans, identify synergies and agree ways of working together

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I have seen many new faces so for those of you who may not be very familiar with CABI, you will be hearing more about us and our work from our CEO, Dr Trevor Nicholls and my colleagues but more importantly you will hear the progress we have made since the Costa Rica meeting. We will also be hearing from our partners on their experience in working with CABI in the last three years.

Tomorrow, we will identify priorities of CABI Member Countries and ways of working in partnership with you all to realise these. My colleagues will be explaining in more details some of the selected number of new initiatives in

CABI such as AgPortal, PestSmart, Biopesticide Portal and lastly, SciDevNet.

On Friday, the Central Experimental Farm and the Ottawa Research and Development Centre have invited us all for a field trip and we encourage all of you to take part.

Lastly and as I conclude – I look forward to close interactions with representatives of our partner institutions – we need your buy-in, commitment and support to pursue the proposals emanating from this Consultation. And so once again, thank you for finding the time to attend. We are very much looking forward to listen to your contributions.

And finally, thanks to my CABI colleagues who have worked tirelessly over many weeks to make this meeting a reality.....!!

*Thank you very much.*