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77th Plenary Meeting ICAC, Abidjan

December 2-6, 2018

Official declaration of the
International Cotton Researchers Association (ICRA)

The International Cotton Researchers Association (ICRA) dates back to 2012, when it was created under the initiative of ICAC, to compensate for the lack of a specifically dedicated international cotton research institute or program. Among its objectives, ICRA ambitions to promote the interaction between cotton scientists in the world.

At international level, there are not that many platforms enabling the interaction of scientists dedicated to cotton cropping. The World Cotton Research Conference set up in 1994 at the initiative of ICAC remains the unique one. This conference is organized every 4 years on average; the 7th conference will take place in Izmir, Turkey in 2020.

Since its establishment, ICRA has provided another tool for the interaction of cotton scientists through its [website](#) and forum discussions. The web tool enables more continuous and permanent interaction but it cannot compensate for the advantages of face to face interaction.

For the limitation above mentioned, ICRA has adhered to ICAC's new approach of having more cotton scientists speaking in this Plenary. It is not only for the purpose of enhancing the interaction between cotton scientists, but it is also to give the opportunity to cotton scientists to be heard by people closer to the decision-taking sphere and where the orientation and the funding of cotton research are debated. For this reason, ICRA has accepted to modestly sponsor the participation of some speakers to this plenary.

The contribution of ICRA to support the participation of speakers to this ICAC Plenary Session is experimental. The replication of this experience in the future is yet to be analyzed. ICRA's financial contribution to ICAC Plenary should not lead to misunderstand its financial means. ICRA is operating only with some money left by the organization of the former six world cotton research conferences. The current financial means are actually insufficient to launch activities destined to transfer knowledge and skills, a phenomenon of transfer which cotton scientists from developing countries should benefit the most.

ICRA strives to get additional means to fulfill its mandate. It can assure a very high programs expense ratio as it operates at almost no costs. It has no permanent staff. All of its executive committee members are involved in benevolent basis. Its Secretariat located in Multan, Pakistan, works for free as a sign of the commitment of the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee to contribute to the international cooperation on cotton research. We do hope that cotton organization in other major cotton producing countries could follow, as well as regional or international funding organizations which have been backstopping cotton production in developing countries.

Thank you for your attention.