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Appointment of New Programme Manager at APPSP

Mr. Shankar Lal Chaudhary has been appointed as the new Programme Manager of the APPSP effective from Chaitra 7, 2062 (20 March 2006). Mr. Chaudhary has Masters Degree in Agriculture Soil Science from H.A.U., Hissar, Haryana, India. Prior to joining the APPSP, he served the Department of Agriculture, MOAC, as the Director General since February of 2003. Similarly, he has served the MOAC in various capacities such as Deputy Director General at the Planning Department of Agriculture, Chief Agriculture Development Officer, Chief Soil Scientist, and similar other important positions. Mr Chaudhary also worked as a Coordinator (Joint Secretary level) of the MARD project of USAID looking after Veri, Rapti, Gandaki and Lumbini Zones.

APPSP: Implementation Status

Since the inception of democracy in Nepal in 1990, there has been widespread realization in the national level especially in the areas of poverty and excluded groups (P&E). To streamline this service as per the spirit of the National Agriculture Policy (NAP) and the Agriculture Perspective Plan Implementation Action Plan (APP-IAP), the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC), has formulated various strategies and policies. In policy front, the earlier balance of APPSP's effort was too internally focused, but now the programme has shifted to an outward looking strategy.

Overall, instead of the adverse and difficult environment in the country, APPSP has conducted well and performed better. It has managed to use 90 percent of the District Agriculture Development Fund (DADF) a key instrument supporting decentralized service delivery in the districts. Approximately 75,000 poor farmers have benefited from DADF of which 30 percent are Dalits and 37 percent Janajatis. Geographical exclusion is still the major constraint and challenge, however, evidence from the second batch indicators suggests a very positive trend. DADF guidelines and systems including weighted criteria needs to be revised effectively. There are priority development goals for the coming decade.

Poverty reduction has always been the prime focus of development intervention all the time, nevertheless problems have been solved. So APPSP has focused more on income generation, food security, agricultural biodiversity utilization, commercialization of agriculture and sustainable livelihoods.

Now that the APP review has started and this could provide a major break-through and positions APPSP at the core of Nepal's rural policy debate. APPSP has significant potential to tap by taking more strategic partnership approach. So we recommend that APPSP consider reformatting its support instruments. In this context, the major challenges of APPSP are as follows:

- Modify reform and maintain service delivery mechanisms;
- Government, NGOs and privatization should be brought to a common platform;
- Coordinate and tie up public and private reform together, and promote and establish a coherent interpretation of the APP.
- Create and maintain service delivery in conflict and deteriorating situation;
- Develop and maintain better communication system from the centre to regions and districts.

Highlights on APP Implementation Action Plan (APP-IAP)

The APP Review and APP Implementation Action Plan exercise was split into three sequential output sections – i) review of completed implementation (APP-Implementation Status Report, ISR); ii) formulation of the broad national implementation action plan for the remaining period (APP-IAP); and iii) the formulation of the district model plan compatible with the broad national action plan (APP-DMP). The exercise entailed intensive review and consultations with a broad range of stakeholders (government, civil societies, local bodies, farmers) at all levels – from the centre to the grassroots, separately for all output sections.

APP-ISR found the overall APP implementation generally deviating from the APP spirit – towards a more favourable stance in some cases and without a purpose in many other cases. The priority inputs performed dismally while priority outputs did relatively better. The overall performance trend was adjudged to have fallen short of expectations with a lot of catching up to do in the remaining period.

A probe into reasons for sub-optimal performance revealed 16 problem areas rooted in three major problem spheres – I) lack of investment; ii) problems in concept and design; and iii) organisational weaknesses.

APP-IAP intends to catch up with these outcomes and impact in the remaining period and move beyond in the new spirit of the changed millennium. It builds on the APP-ISR to the extent that the root causes of sub-optimal performance in APP implementation are addressed - not just the symptoms. It maintains the basic spirit and objectives of the APP with renewed strategies and priorities to achieve the objectives in the changed context accommodating reforms underway in (a) overall government policies such as the trade liberalization, private sector development policy, poverty reduction strategy paper/10th Plan, decentralized governance, medium term expenditure framework, institutional polycentricity, (b) sub-sectoral policies such as National Agricultural Policy 2004, Rural Infrastructure Policy 2004, Irrigation Policy 2003, Revised Forest Policy 2000 and (c) consequences of recent events such as on-going conflict, deterioration of peace and security situations, membership to the world trade bodies such as the WTO, SAFTA and BIMSTEC, and more importantly farmers' increasing demands and claims for better services (quality and quantity).

The overall strategy pursued by the APP-IAP is to achieve broad-based and equitable agricultural growth with direct and indirect impacts on poverty reduction. To ensure good governance, it has adopted some uncompromisable principles in implementation such as transparency, accountability, evidence-based planning, responsive to differences between target groups, plurality of service providers, gender mainstreaming, social inclusion and environment conservation.

While APP-IAP recognises the need for the priority outputs and the priority inputs, their composition has been modified and expanded. APP-IAP has now been made sector-wide such that all activities under the MOAC including the core activities are now within the APP. The APP activities of other related Ministries, due to its multi-sectoral design, will be the sub-set of their respective ministerial activities. By design, it will be demand responding, flexible, fully nested with the national and local plans, adequately institutionalised with clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, fully devolved, and conflict sensitive. It envisages continual development, reform and refinement of sub-sector strategies at national and district level, formulation of annual district agricultural development plan and use the clustering approach to implement it at the district level. To ensure this, it requires high level analysis of international, domestic trade, microeconomic policy, three-pronged service delivery approach etc which informs the development of APP-IAP strategies.

The APP-IAP framework is thus rooted in learning and relearning, sharing of experiences, knowledge and information at different levels, central and district, and between different groups of actors and stakeholders- public, private, CSOs and farmers. The framework is sequentially grouped into analysis, strategies, prioritisation measures for national schemes/projects and the District Agricultural Development

Plan. Macro-economic policies will be made agriculture friendly – through higher allocation for agriculture, tight fiscal and monetary policy and monitoring of real exchange rates. Three-pronged service delivery will be ensured differentiating farmers into three categories (extremely poor, poor and non-poor) based on the risk internalisation capacity. The extremely poor group will be entitled for state support including safety-net, poor group will witness targeted access to basic services while non-poor group will be targeted for agricultural commercialisation.

Established conflict sensitive approaches using NGOs, CBOs and informal private sector and the application of “Do no harm” principles have also been emphasised. Private sector will be mobilised for production, service delivery and investment through the creation of enabling environment. Furthermore, in view of the poor performance of APP due to organisational weaknesses, high importance has been attached to institutional and management improvements. The nodal APP management agency has been upgraded to Cabinet secretariat level from MOAC due to APP’s multisectoral nature. The coordination structure has also been upgraded as NAPPC chaired by NPC Vice-chairman. Planning divisions of the APP Ministries have been designated for coordinating the APP function under each ministry. Likewise, internal APP monitoring functions are to be carried out by respective M&E division/sections. At the district level, all sub-sector committees are replaced by one single committee – DANRC. Similarly, in view of the need for independent high level analysis requirement, it is suggested to re-establish APP-IAU turned APPMAU (renamed as CAAS) outside the government but in its close proximity. Block grants and conditional grants to local bodies, outsourcing for service delivery to private sector and NGOs are some of the financing modes for implementing APP activities. Donor harmonization with spending efficiency, poverty orientation and expanding MTEF prioritisation process are advised.

Highlights on National Agriculture Extension Strategy (NAES)

A National Consultation on National Agriculture Extension Strategy (NAES) was held on 21 March 2006 under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, HMG/N. The Consultation was held to solicit comments, suggestions and any other innovative prospects on the draft National Agriculture Extension Strategy (NAES), which is under the finalization process. The MOAC had already formed a Task Force Team in 2004 for formulating a contemporary NAES. Consequently, the APPSP hired a consulting team, NARMA Consultancy, to support this team.

The participants included senior government officials from key ministries/departments, representatives of Regional Directorates of Agriculture and Livestock and representatives of NARC, NARDF, major NGOs and donor communities. At the National Consultation, Mr. Ashishwar Jha, Joint Secretary, MOAC and Coordinator of the Task Force on the National Agriculture Extension Strategy, presented the draft report.

He highlighted that the Extension Strategy is being prepared with the major objective of providing a common framework for funding and delivery of agricultural extension services which will address to the varying needs and demands of the different categories of farmers (very poor, poor and non-poor), ensure farmers' equitable access to opportunities and benefits due to the provisioning of services, ensure active participation of all relevant actors and stakeholders and facilitate competitiveness in production and marketing system. Similarly, the study aims at encouraging the various partners and agencies within the national agricultural system to provide efficient and effective services and complement and reinforce each other, increase farmers capacity towards self-reliance for improvements in sustainable livelihoods and encourage the establishment and operation of environment friendly agro-based industries by promoting production of appropriate raw materials for agricultural and livestock based industries.

The major thrust of NAES is based on the following areas: Income generation, Food security, Conservation of Environment and Agricultural Biodiversity, Value addition and ensuring quality of agricultural products and Commercial and competitive agriculture. The NAES attempts to bring Reforms in institutional aspects through Complementary privatization. Privatisation of extension services will not aim at substituting the private sector for public extension services. However, it will aim at a reduction in the role of the public sector to pave way for an enhanced role of the private initiatives in the agricultural extension service. Similarly, collaboration will be built with (I) NGOs and (N) NGOs but partnership with district based NGOs and CBOs. Specifically, attempts will be made to ensure collaboration between Public Sector (DADO/DLSO) and CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) for an effective service delivery mechanism.

Furthermore, national and district programmes will be planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated according to projectization approach. Similarly, performance of service providers (e.g. DADO and DLSO) will be measured in terms of number and types of successfully accomplished projects but not based on process alone such as number of farmer groups formed, reorganized or mobilized, or number of saplings/chickens/goats distributed, etc.

More importantly, the national agriculture extension strategy, which is under preparation attempts to reach the undetached areas (prioritizing remote, inaccessible areas) and groups (poor and vulnerable). Overall, the NAES has introduced the following elements in the strategy:

- Development, utilization and mobilization of local farmer experts by commodity and program (e.g., commodity- poultry, programme-integrated pest management)
- Work in partnership with district based NGOs and CBOs
- Use conflict sensitive service delivery methods
- Train frontline extension workers and local farmer experts on social skills also

- Institutionalize projectization approach, and support project holistically
- Service delivery to be focused on outcome/output and targeted services in accordance with the three pronged service delivery approach

The NAES is being finalized by the MOAC.

Agriculture Research Impact, Responsiveness and Future Priorities

In order to suggest the way forward for the study findings of “Review of Research Impact, Responsiveness and Future Priorities in the Agriculture Sector in Nepal”, a meeting was held at the APPSP meeting room under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, HMG/N. The meeting decided to form a Task Force with Mr. Bhairab Raj Kaini, Joint Secretary, MOAC, as the Coordinator of the Task Force. The Members of the Task Force included Mr. Kiran Pandey, Director, AEC, Mr. Bimal K. Bania, Chief, Botany Division, NARC, Mr. Biju K. Shrestha, Under-Secretary, NPC, and Mr. Madhav Karki, Agricultural Economist, MOAC. Dr. Purushottam Mainali, Programme Manager, APPSP, was designated as the Member Secretary. Mr. Ganesh Kumar KC, Secretary, MOAC, kindly consented to guide the Task Force as an Advisor. As for the major responsibilities, the Task Force will assess the Recommendations of the Report in view of the overall agricultural research policy in general and Vision 2021 in particular and suggest implementable recommendations and, in turn, appropriate implementation modalities.

Based on the guidelines provided, the Task Force has been entrusted with the following tasks and responsibilities:

- Identify priority areas for agricultural research.
- Suggest model for functional linkages among the pluralistic research agencies (public -- private -- academic) research and suggest institutional mechanism to forge and coordinate the linkage effectively
- Suggest institutional mechanisms for effective linkage and coordination along the chain of actors (research -- extension -- academia) to synergize the research impact.
- Incorporate relevant Indian experiences based on the review of their existing functional system and institutional mechanisms and suggest appropriate measures for Nepal.

Livelihoods and Social Inclusion/PMAS Orientation Workshop

Promoting social Inclusion is one of the primary concern of Nepal's current 10th plan/PRSP. Accordingly HMG/N's ministries has initiated a process of targeting their respective Programme towards better inclusion of poor and excluded (p and e). A system called Poverty Analysis and Monitoring system is

established at the National Planning Commission to ensure that the development programme is well on track on the poverty focus. The PMAS has proposed a number of indicators for each ministry for the purpose.



A clear and common understanding of the prevailing issues of exclusion is needed, to be able to direct its activities to the poorest and socially excluded farmers. MOAC has recently formed a task force to look into the information requirement to establish PMAS indicators and to devise ways and means to incorporate p and e focus into the regular Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. Hence, to support the initiation of MOAC, APPSP has organised a three day LSI/PMAS orientation workshop in all five Regional directorate of DOA and DLS during the month of December 2005. The participants of the orientation included DADO, DLSO and the Planning Officer of DADO of the respective districts in the region. The objectives of the orientation were:

- to familiarize the district stakeholders primarily the DADO/DLSO with the concept of LSI/PMAS;
- to introduce the newly developed information collection tools for PMAS; and
- to sensitize district and regional stakeholders on the importance on the disaggregated level of information for inclusive planning and monitoring.

Altogether 300 plus participants took part in the orientation. The members of the Task Force formed to develop P&E focus M&E system in MOAC facilitated the orientation with technical and financial support from APPSP. Topics discussed during the workshops were; LSI data disaggregation, sensitization on the concept of social inclusion, social barriers, domains of change (Assets/Services, Voice/Agency influences, Rules of the Game), PMAS and DMAS indicators, refinements of monitoring tools. The evaluation exercise carried out at the end of the session revealed a very positive response from the participants.

NARC's Research Achievements

NARC is an autonomous body established as per NARC, Act 2048. NARC's aims are to conduct agricultural research in line with government policy to identify and solve agriculture problems by generating suitable technologies and to access the government in formulating policies and strategies.

Of the major activities of NARC in the FY 2062/063, the following are the significant ones:

1. Crop and Horticulture Research

Crop Research: The varieties of Unnani and Preeti in Mustard, Rajshri and Baidehi in Peanut, Kalyan and Pratichya in Mungbean have been released. In addition, Ramdhan, Radhika and Mithila in Rice, Makwanpur – 5, Makwanpur – 7 in Maize, Sunaina in Soyabean are in the process of released. The hybrid maize and quality protein maize have been identified and developed.

Horticulture Research: The hybrid tomatoes have been identified and successfully experimented in the farmer's field. The technologies for perennial lemon production and cold storage for orange have been developed. The farmers are benefiting from the technologies developed for off-season vegetable (onion, tomato, cucumber) production by utilizing plastic tunnel.

2. Livestock and Fishery Research

Livestock Research: The technology to improve artificial insemination has been developed for buffalo. The technology to improve the nutrient content in winter fodder has been developed by using the mixture of urea, molasses, protein and mineral. Feeding technology has helped prevent deforestation by curbing open pasture. The technologies to control mastitis and embryo transplant have been developed.

Fishery Research: The breeding technology of trout in farmers' pond has been developed. Similarly, the technology for breeding *Labeo dero* has also been successful.

Nepal&IRRI (Nepal Rice Research Institute): Renewed MoU for Three-Year Workplan

Nepal-IRRI Office organized Work Plan Meeting for 2006-2008 and Letter of Agreement Extending the memorandum of Understanding for Scientific and Technical Cooperation in Research and Training on Rice between Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) on 10 March 2006 in the Meeting of NARC, Nepal. The Meeting was chaired and inaugurated by Mr. Ganesh Kumar K.C., Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MoAC), Nepal. In this Meeting, Dr. Ren Wang, Deputy Director General-Research (DDG-R), IRRI, Dr. J.K. Ladha, Dr. Sushil Pandey, Dr. Edwin Javier and Dr. David Johnson, Senior Scientists, IRRI; Joint Secretaries from MoAC; Representatives from Department of Agriculture; Directors Division Heads, Scientists from National Rice

Research Programme (NRRP) and other Regional Agricultural Research Stations (RARS) and Research Programmes, NARC participated the Meeting.

In the beginning of the Meeting, Dr. N.P. Adhikari, Coordinator, National Rice Research Programme (NRRP) presented the “Highlight of Rice Research in Nepal”. Dr. Ren Wang, DDG, IRRI presented “Meeting the Millennium Challenges for Rice Science: IRRI’s New Strategic Plan and Research Projects”. Dr. S.L. Maskey, Director, Crops and Horticulture, NARC presented Summary of Nepal-IRRI Work for 2006-2008. Dr. Maskey mentioned that two projects related to increasing productivity of rice-wheat system has been completed, four projects on different aspects on rice are on-going and five projects are proposed for the future.

On behalf of NARC, Nepal, Dr. R.P. Sah, Executive Director (ED), NARC, and on behalf of IRRI, Dr. Ren Wang, Deputy Director General (DDG), signed in both the documents. Dr. R.P. Sah welcomed IRRI Guests and the participants of the meeting and remarked the long history of Nepal-IRRI collaboration and this has been further strengthened after IRRI opened its Office in NARC, Nepal from January 2005. Dr. B.P. Tripathi, IRRI Representative to Nepal gave the vote of Thanks. Mr. Ganesh Kumar K.C., Chairman of the Meeting and Secretary, MoAC, remarked that IRRI is playing a vital role in generating rice technologies to increase rice production and productivity in the world. The Chairman further emphasized that rice technologies should be developed for diverse environments to feed the hungry people of Nepal and the gloves.

Open Forum with the Media was also organized after the meeting, where media personnel asked questions with IRRI and NARC Scientists. Dr. Sushil Pandey, Senior Agricultural Economist, and Deputy Head of Social Science Division, IRRI, highlighted that IRRI is developing high yielding varieties of upland rice for Tar areas. Similarly, Dr. R.P. Sah, ED, NARC, mentioned that NARC and IRRI will be developing high yielding varieties and technologies of rice for the irrigated areas. Dr. Sah also indicated that to reduce the cost of production of rice, NARC has already initiated research.

According to the data of NARC, area under rice is 1.5 million hectares and the production is 4.5 million tons. Dr. N.P. Adhikari, Coordinator, National Rice Research Programme (NRRP), NARC remarked that rice production and productivity has doubled when we compare the rice production of 30 years ago and now. Thirty years ago, total rice production of Nepal was only 2.0 million tons. So far NARC has released 49 varieties of rice in Nepal. Only 50% rice area is under irrigation and 71% of the rice production comes from Terai of Nepal.

Crop Diversification Project (CDP): Mid-term Review

The Crop Diversification Project (CDP) covers majority of the potential production pockets for promotion of secondary crops in the project districts. The Mission has estimated incremental production of the crops from the PPAs and cash income by selling the crops are 19,000 t and NRs336 million, respectively, compared with the base year (2001). About 51% of the project beneficiaries are poor farmers from disadvantaged communities, and 46% of the total beneficiaries are women, which indicate that major share of the incremental income is going to these people. The project achievements are consistent with the trust of the Nepal Country Strategy and Program 2005 – 2009. The progress report has estimated that about 80% of the incremental crop production is consumed by the producers themselves. This should have contributed to improvement in their family nutritional level. However, systematic assessment of income per beneficiary household, employment opportunities created through intensive cultivation of secondary crops and their marketing, and change in nutritional level is necessary to ascertain the extent of Project's development objectives attained. The Project's implementation progress is estimated to be about 74%, at the elapsed loan period of 72% as of 31 December 2005. Tentative progress of each of the four project components is summarized below.

Provision of Extension Services for Farmer Groups : DADOs implement this component jointly with field teams (comprising one male and one female social mobilizers in each PPA, and one team supervisor in each district) supplied through NGOs contracted under the Project. Out of the total 205 PPAs selected for the Project, 193 are under this component and the remaining 12 are with the second component. This component's implementation progress is estimated to be about 72%.

Promotion of Private Extension Services: All 12 PPAs (one from each project district) under this component were contracted out to the private sector from the first and second quarter of 2003 for social mobilization and extension services for marketable production of secondary crops. DADOs are expected to monitor performance of the program. Social mobilization and extension services delivered by the private sector in the remaining 11 PPAs were generally satisfactory. It is estimated that this component has achieved 79% physical progress. The collaborative modality of CDP and the role of local field teams will be more important in future as the Government has downsized the number of agriculture service center/sub-centers countrywide to create better environment for the private sector to provide extension services.

Promotion of Client-oriented Research: This component has a target to undertake 24 priority research studies to support gradual commercialization of agriculture through qualified public and private research institutions selected on competitive basis. In spite of some initial delays, this component's implementation has improved, and has achieved about 72% physical target.

Future Support for the Project Area: The Secretary, MOAC requested the Mission to indicate possible similar future ADB support to the project area, as it is in the poorest and most insurgency-hit regions. The Mission clarified that there is no similar project in ADB's lending pipeline for the project area yet. However, the Mission assured Secretary, MOAC that it would convey the ADB Management MOAC's interest for a similar support. The Mission also suggested MOAC to discuss this matter in the forthcoming ADB's Country Programming Mission tentatively scheduled for March/April 2006.

Community Livestock Development Project (CLDP)

The Community Livestock Development Project (CLDP) is a people-centred project with the main objective of reducing poverty, mainly in rural areas. The Project functions on the basis of the following principles: market/demand led approach, gender mainstreaming, public/private partnership, flexible project management, local body capacity improvement and environmental management. The project aims to improve the levels of food security, nutrition, incomes and employment for 69,000 families through increased productivity in an environmentally sustainable and socially suitable manner. The project is conducted in three modules; i) Intensive Livestock Production (ILP) in 22 districts, ii) Processing, Marketing and Commercialization in 21, mainly Terai districts in addition to the emerging area in the aforementioned ILP districts, and iii) Multi-sectoral Higher Altitude Pilot Project in five districts.

Expected Outputs and Benefits

- A total of 1,64,000 households benefit already from increased livestock productivity, processing and marketing activities.
- For capita income of NRs. 2,925 (1995/96 prices) of poor households increased by 50 percent by the end of the Project period.
- 20 percent increase in nutritional intake of girls and boys under 6 years of age in the Project area.
- 1,700 livestock enterprises developed creating around 6,000 new jobs.

The project components of CLDP include the following:

- Community Development and Capacity Building
- Livestock Productivity Improvement
- Livestock Processing and Marketing
- Higher Altitude Livelihood Pilot Project
- Project Management Services

Under CLDP, social preparedness and mobilization is given much importance before livestock programme intervention. Four districts (Lamjung, Tanahun, Palpa and Nawalparasi) that had performed well under the Third Livestock Development Project will act as "Lead Districts", the successful activities of which can serve as models to strive to. The livestock pockets will be area based rather than commodity based and therefore the poorer section of the society will be selected for growth of livestock pockets. The livestock

development programme will not run in isolation and hence linkages with other development line agencies will be established as and when required.

National Consultation on Policy Analysis Studies 2061/62

Two separate Discussion programmes on Draft Final Report of the policy studies undertaken during 2061/62 was held on 28 March 2006 and 5 May 2006 under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, HMG/N. The Consultations were held to solicit comments, suggestions and any other innovative prospects on the draft report of five policy studies undertaken during the last fiscal year. The five studies include:

- (a) Import Substitution of Carpet Wool in Nepal,
- (b) A Study on APP Monitoring and Evaluation,
- (c) Establishment of Agriculture Resource centre,
- (d) Export Potential of Agricultural Commodities and
- (e) A Study on Income Generating Opportunities in High Hills and Mountains.

The participants included senior government officials from key ministries/departments, representatives of NARC, NARDF, major NGOs and donor communities. The consulting firms presented the major findings and recommendations of their respective studies.

Efforts to Discourage Bird Flu

There has been no case of Bird Flu in Nepal so far. The MOAC has been taking all possible measures to prevent the entry of this deadly virus from abroad. In this connection, sample collection from sensitive areas and clinical examinations are being carried out by various units. In particular, the networks under the Department of Livestock Services have been put on high alert.

The government has prohibited imports of birds including all kind of bird feeds and any other materials likely to be infected from all the countries that have had cases of Bird Flu. In order to enforce this prohibition, a Task Force has been constituted under the leadership of the Livestock Quarantine Offices along the border areas with representation from all the concerned central, regional and district level offices. Furthermore, the Department of Livestock Services has designed and been implementing an Action Plan in a coordinated approach with representation from all the concerned including professionals, farmers, industrialists, businesses and others.

Exposure Visit for Capacity Enhancement of Government Officials

An exposure visit was organized by the APPSP for HMG official of MOAC and MLD. The main objective of the visit was to give exposure on recent reform measures initiated in the agriculture service delivery, its working modality, institutional linkages, market liberalization, decentralization and approaches reaching the poor and disadvantaged group in Thailand (Bangkok) and Vietnam (Hanoi City and Ho Chi Minh City). The group was comprised of 14 government officials (thirteen from Ministry of Agriculture and one from Ministry of Local Development) and led by the Deputy Program Manager of APPSP Mr. Dharendra K. Karki. The group visited two countries, Vietnam and Thailand, from February 18 to February 27, 2006.

The participants of the study visit were:

1. Mr. Janardan Adhikary, Sr. Agril. Economist, MOAC
2. Mr. Hem Raj Regmi, Sr. Statistical Officer , MOAC
3. Mr. Yogendra Kumar Karki, Sr. Agril. Economist, MOAC
4. Mr. Surendra Kumar Subedi, Sr. Agril. Economist, MOAC
5. Mr. Kamal Raj Pande, Section Officer, MOAC
6. Dr. Karna Bdr. Bogati, Regional Director, RLSD, Dipayal
7. Mr. Dwarika Pd. Dahal, Sr. A.D.O., DADO Siraha
8. Mr. Narendra Raj Baral, Local Devt. Officer, DDC, Doti
9. Mr. Ram Pd. Pulami, Sr. Agril. Economist, DOA
10. Mr. Dharendra K. Karki, Deputy Program Manager, APPSP
11. Mr. Aaita Singh Gurung, Hort.Devt. Officer, DADO Achham
12. Dr NabinGhimire, Livestok Devt. Officer, DLSO Okhaldunga
13. Mr. Satyendra Pd. Singh, Sr. ADO, DADO Rautahat
14. Dr. Satya Narayan Sah, Vety. Officer, DLSO Bajura

The group visited several institutions in both countries, which mainly included the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of International Cooperation and Department of Cooperatives. Department of International cooperation, Department of Agriculture Extension and Department of Agricultural Policy Research and Analysis and Institute of Agricultural Sciences of Southern Vietnam in Vietnam. In Vietnam, the group shared experiences between Nepal and Vietnam on cooperative development activities, strategies, decentralization process of agriculture service delivery and community irrigation system. Discussion was also made on various issues and progress about Cooperative development, Agriculture extension services delivery system and agriculture policy research with the officials of Dept of cooperatives, Department of International cooperation, Department of Agriculture Extension and Department of Agricultural Policy Research and Analysis.

Similarly, in Thailand, the group visited Sao Hai Water User Association, which operates an irrigation project under Royal Irrigation Department. The Water Users Association, SAO Hai, currently, manages the water distribution and utilization process sustainably and efficiently with the support of Royal Irrigation Department. Farmers raise paddy even during dry season due to the availability of water. Similarly, the group also shared experiences of Nepal and Thailand about farmers Association and irrigation development activities. Due to access to road, irrigation and market facilities the Government of Thailand has adopted '*One village one product*' strategy. The study group also had extensive interactions with the Nepali Professors and students at AIT.

Overall, the study group learned several lessons through the visit of the two countries, of which the following were the major ones:

- The rapid economic progress in Vietnam is due to a strong commitment on the part of the government as well as the political leaders; and investment by the government and private sectors.
- The government should set clear cut vision and priorities for overall development to achieve poverty reduction goal. Furthermore, separate policies for poor and big farmers should be set.
- Contract-out and lease out system are common practices for agriculture farming and marketing.
- The government should give high priority to agricultural commercialization and marketing sector.
- Participatory and partnership programs are much more effective and successful compared to non-participatory methods.
- Wide transport network and infrastructure development are the key for rural and agricultural development.
- Community based irrigation system management is very much successful.
- Natural Resource Management should be given a high priority for achieving a sustainable development.

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