AIRCA’s contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals
How AIRCA can help to achieve SDGs

The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015 in New York. They replace the Millennium Development Goals which had achieved substantial changes in all areas. The 17 SDGs and 169 targets were developed in a process of consultations involving governments, civil society and many other stakeholders from around the globe, including AIRCA Centers such as AVRDC which played an active role in the formulation of SDG 2.

The Association of International Research and Development Centers for Agriculture (AIRCA, www.airca.org), is pleased to see that agriculture, food and nutrition security have a prominent place on the new sustainable development goals agenda, and its nine member organizations are committed to helping our partner countries in achieving these goals. Supported by more than 60 member countries, which make up over 70% of the world’s population, AIRCA members have activities in all major geographic regions and ecosystem types. All have a proven track record of research, development and implementation, working closely with farmers, extension systems, national research institutes, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector across a wide range of crops and ecosystems.

The priorities and expertise of the AIRCA centers contribute directly to nine of the SDGs (below) and can help partner countries meet these goals as part of the national sustainable development action plans that countries are now developing.

Many of the ambitious goals and targets are linked and interdependent, for example, protecting biodiversity and food development and losing less, like soil fertility, seed health, integrated pest management and crop storage among treated wastewater and saline water for agricultural production. Sustainable water management, and nutrition security (SDGs 2 and 15), which for many countries cannot be separated. The landscape approach, to involving governments, civil society and many other stakeholders from around the globe, including AIRCA Centers to capacity building and technology, like the use of plant clinics and mobile communications, such as AVRDC which played an active role in the formulation of SDG 2.

Strengthening of scientific and technological capacity is required in order to manage natural resources in a more sustainable way, which is a part of AIRCA members’ mandates. This for example includes projects that build local agrisystem capacity with farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs, AIRCA also encourages companies to adopt sustainable practices throughout the agriculture value chain and to integrate sustainability into their production systems.

Increasing the amount of land dedicated to agriculture cannot be easily accomplished and could have significant negative impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services, particularly water resources, terrestrial carbon and climate change mitigation. One of many examples in AIRCA is the promotion of bamboo, which is used by many INBAR member states to prevent erosion at riverbanks and lakeshores, while also providing an excellent source of fodder and food. Using marginal lands for agricultural production can also offer a solution to sustainable use of land resources.

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