



The following is an edited extract from a speech given by the outgoing CEO of ACIAR, Mr Peter Core, to the Australian Institute of International Affairs.

ACIAR–Australian foreign policy: its interaction

As the outgoing ACIAR CEO, I hesitate to comment directly on the linkages between ACIAR programs and our foreign policy interests even though I have worked at this intersection for the past seven years. I am not grounded in a foreign policy discipline but I know there is a substantive body of thinking behind the discipline of international relations. I come from agriculture, nevertheless I can observe and, as a career civil servant, I have responded to the foreign policy priorities of the day.

At the macro level, it is in Australia's interest to narrow the income gap between Australia and its partner countries and in countries between those dependent on agriculture and those working in other sectors. It is in our long-term interests. Even from a narrow perspective, rising living standards in the region will be of direct benefit to Australian agriculture—to say nothing of the broader commercial benefits of growing interdependence.

Most will have picked up on the foreign policy nuances between the present Australian Government and its predecessor. One of these is engagement with Africa. The recent Africa Day speech by Foreign Minister Smith on 25 May 2009 reflects this new commitment. You only have to reflect on the recent G8 Leaders Statement on Global Food Security to recognise the importance of agriculture to Africa.

In our case, ACIAR has been asked by the Government to re-engage with Africa. I am hoping that by the end of this year, a \$20 million initiative over the next four years, focusing on maize-based cropping systems in eastern and southern Africa, will have commenced. The initiative will engage with CIMMYT—the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center—from its hub in Nairobi, working with national research systems in six African countries alongside two Australian research agencies. African counterparts will come to Australia, train, get formal qualifications built around this specific maize initiative, and obtain first-hand experience with our agronomic practices.

When reflecting on African agriculture and food security it is important to recognise the assessed latent production potential in many

parts of that continent. A range of studies illustrate the significant and persistent yield gaps in cropping and livestock industries that can be rectified with good adaptive science and capacity-building initiatives. All of us will win and I am sure that the Australian maize industry, based primarily in Queensland, will also benefit from this research. I am also confident that Australia's relationships and stature as a middle-sized economy will be enhanced through effective delivery of agricultural results in a hungry continent.

There are other examples of where ACIAR programs are being shaped by Australian foreign policy priorities. Importantly, the conduct and objectivity of the research has always been respected by our political masters within the directional guidelines from the Minister of the day, and that is a reflection of our robust governmental systems.

But I would not be true to myself if I did not think there was more—much more—to ACIAR than engagement at the macro level of international relations. There is much more that ACIAR does at the micro level of foreign policy. ACIAR today has about 200 substantive current research initiatives with partner countries. Each one of these projects has three or four Australians working over several years with counterparts. Over the period of engagement, life-long friendships are formed. These Australian research providers are the true foot soldiers. They are 'doing well by doing good' because they believe in their profession as scientists and the importance of expanding global food production on a sustainable basis.

Embedded in what I think of as everyday foreign policy is the vital importance of institution building in the partner country. ACIAR has been operating for 27 years and there is now a fairly vibrant, or at least emergent, network of agricultural research providers in most of the countries where we work. Not all, but for the most part, these research institutions are home grown—with helping hands from ACIAR and AusAID. The influence of such institutions in their respective societies can be more widespread than simply their core agricultural mandates.

Another way of thinking about ACIAR's contribution in a foreign policy context is summed up in a conversation I had with one of Australia's ambassadors in the region. He said about ACIAR: "It's one of those engagements that puts ballast in the relationship. Difficulties come, but they go more quickly when there is long-term ballast in the relationship."

An example in this context is East Timor. Our biggest single project (A\$10 million over five years) is in East Timor: the 'Seeds of Life' project. It is a wonderful project making a real difference in basic food security. In addition to strengthening household security, sweetpotatoes introduced through the project are now being sold in the markets, generating income. We know this because the skin colour of the potato is a great marker of the improved variety. But when my successors look back, one of the significant achievements that we will see is a firmly established East Timorese agricultural research capability.

It is not talked about today in those terms but this institution building will be reflected in the ongoing contemporary relationships of the two countries—Australia and East Timor—just as Australia's work in Cambodia during the 1990s has helped restore that country's rice production systems. That engagement was catalytic in establishing and staffing CARDI—the Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute—with Cambodians with postgraduate qualifications from Australian universities gained working on ACIAR-funded projects.

As I look back at 36 years of public service, what I put weight on is the sustainability of institutional quality. Such quality institutions don't just turn up; they require long-term commitment and nurturing because it is quality institutions and their partnerships that form a vital ingredient of macro-level international relations.

ACIAR: A DAUNTING CHALLENGE

By its nature research is a long-term enterprise and many of our most important research breakthroughs have been unforeseen in their inception. It is the nature of the research endeavour. But there are some things that we can be more certain about as time unfolds:

- our current global population of 6.7 billion people will reach 9 billion during this century, with an additional 750 million people born each year
- the majority of the world's population will live in urban areas, many in mega-cities
- the demand for food will more than double and diversify as incomes rise and consumers spend more on better, higher-value foods
- this higher demand will put pressure on natural resources and accentuate water scarcity, soil degradation and biodiversity loss.

These issues confront us today and it will only be by concerted action that we will avoid being overwhelmed by them. Irrigated agriculture has been a big driver of higher output and key water basins in the region are now under significant pressure by users. When taken with the likelihood of increased climate variability, demands will put increasing pressure on our global natural resource systems. It is not just the vital agenda of 'more crop per drop' but the rapidly growing demands for water from cities, industry and the environment. It is also about the emerging question mark over contribution of the Tibetan Plateau to the vital river systems of South and North Asia that is being challenged by climate change.

But I do not despair when I can look in the recent past at:

- new rice cultivars for Africa with resistance to local pests and diseases that continue the high yields of Asian rice
- the more than 50 varieties of recently developed drought-tolerant maize
- the flood-tolerant version of a rice variety grown on six million hectares in Bangladesh
- the widespread adoption of resource-conserving zero-till technology in the vital rice/wheat systems of South Asia
- the successful biological control of the cassava mealy bug and green mite, both devastating pests of a root crop that is vital for food security in Africa
- the work now underway on Ug99, a black stem rust first found in Ugandan wheat in 1999 that has the potential to reduce grain yields by up to 70% if not conquered soon by the incorporation of resistance material from the international genebanks.

As I conclude my talk here today, I am basically an optimist with provisos. I do not think we are going to be overwhelmed provided we stay focused, think longer term and provide funding growth to international agricultural research. There has been plenty of

INTRODUCING NICK AUSTIN

Dr Nick Austin is ACIAR's new chief executive officer. His appointment was announced by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith on 21 July 2009.

Minister Smith welcomed Dr Austin's appointment to manage Australia's premier international agricultural research body, at a time of change and challenge for agriculture.

"Agriculture in developing countries faces the global challenges of climate change, food security and an international economic downturn. ACIAR is well-placed to play a key role in helping partner countries achieve sustainable, resilient and productive farming systems to respond to these challenges," Minister Smith said.

Dr Austin will manage an increase in ACIAR's operations as it returns to commissioning projects in Africa, expands its research on climate change and enhances its activities in the Pacific region, while maintaining its current operations.

"I have been aware of ACIAR's reputation for excellence in scientific research for development for a number of years and I am excited about building on that foundation," Dr Austin said. "There are a number of challenges

in the developing world that ACIAR can help address as part of Australia's aid program."

Dr Austin paid tribute to Peter Core, who retired as CEO of ACIAR after seven years. "Peter Core has set a standard for ACIAR that will be challenging to follow. He has overseen a significant increase in ACIAR's budget allocation, and enhanced the centre's

reputation both in Australia and the region."

Dr Austin has held a range of senior positions in both the NSW and Victorian public service in the agricultural area. Educated at the University of Melbourne and University of Sydney, Dr Austin holds a Doctor of Philosophy, a Master of Sustainable Management and a Bachelor of Engineering (Agriculture) with Honours.

In addition, Dr Austin has served on the Agricultural Ministerial Advisory Council and been a member of the Standing Committee on Gene Technology and the National Biosecurity Committee. Dr Austin's background in agricultural and natural resource research and policy and his significant experience in scientific program management complements ACIAR's international development program.



Dr Nick Austin

recent political focus at the global level:

- the recent G8 Leaders Statement on Global Food Security
- the 2008 G8 Leaders Statement from Tokyo
- the report of the High Level Task Force set up by the UN Secretary-General.

Here in Australia the Government has taken decisive action to increase funding for 'Food Security through Rural Development' from its international development assistance program. The Government has committed A\$464.3 million in new funding over the next four years "to support increases in food production globally and strengthen the ability of countries in the Asia-Pacific region and Africa to address food insecurity".

Focused political attention is essential, but I am also thinking about the focus of our research endeavour. I remain staggered with the way the international community has transferred attention from the basic staples of production to

virtually every other issue over the past 15 years when overall funding was stagnant. That, in effect, was taking our eye off the ball.

Yes, I remain an optimist with provisos—knowing that by the middle of this century the world will need to more than double its food production from effectively the same landmass with less and more variable water. This means high yields—of the basic staples—in developing countries.

Economic growth matters. The agricultural, fisheries and forestry industries in our partner countries can be significant contributors to sustained, broad-based growth. Many countries have growth spurts but only a few sustain this growth. As partner countries secure their food base, agricultural research and innovation will remain centrepieces of this growth agenda. To quote Minister Smith: "Economic growth remains the most powerful long-term solution to poverty." ■

ACIAR OPERATIONAL PLAN AND BUDGET

ACIAR's Annual Operational Plan (AOP) for 2009–10 is now available online. The AOP sets out how the centre's funding for the coming financial year will be allocated and includes research priorities by country.

A key component of the Australian Government's Official Development Assistance Program is the Overseas Development Assistance – Food Security through Rural Development Initiative. ACIAR's program will support this initiative.

The initiative recognises that agriculture has a central role in achieving food security and facilitating broad-based economic growth. The global recession has had, and will continue to have, an impact on developing countries, making the challenge of achieving rural development more important.

Australia's aid program has established a strategic framework to govern the work of AusAID and ACIAR. The core principles of this framework are:

- accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals
- recognition that although economic growth is the most powerful long-term solution to poverty, economic growth will not, by itself, deliver fair and stable societies
- a strong emphasis on the Asia–Pacific region, while also increasing efforts in Africa and South Asia

- an emphasis on the power of education to promote development
- a commitment to continue to improve effectiveness.

ACIAR's program in 2009–10 is one component of the new initiative. It recognises the importance of lifting productivity on a sustainable basis over the longer term to strengthen broad-based economic growth in rural areas. The centre will continue to target its investment in the poorer countries of the region (such as Lao PDR and Cambodia) and in lagging regions within partner countries.

In addition to ongoing work, ACIAR will focus additional funding on four areas:

- safeguarding food security in the rice-based farming systems of South Asia and South-East Asia
- helping South Asia and South-East Asian crop and livestock production systems respond to climate change
- maximising opportunities for developing high-value agriculture, forestry and fisheries products in the Pacific nations
- contributing to global agricultural productivity through increased support to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

Additional details of these new programs can be found in the AOP at www.aciar.gov.au/publication/AOP_current

Australia reaffirms its commitment to the MDGs

The Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Bob McMullan MP, has highlighted the Australian Government's commitment to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their focus on international efforts to reduce global poverty by 2015.

In a display of support for the MDGs, Mr McMullan launched eight icons of the goals posted along 20 metres of windows in Canberra's central business district.

"With the global economic recession forcing more people in developing countries into poverty, Australia is even more determined to stick to its commitment to

achieving the United Nations MDGs," Mr McMullan said.

The goals include:

- halving extreme hunger and poverty
- getting all children into school
- making women more equal
- reducing child mortality
- improving maternal health
- combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- protecting the environment
- working in partnership to make poverty history.

"We have now reached a critical stage, with the global economic recession threatening progress towards MDG targets," Mr McMullan said. "Developing countries in our region need help more than ever. These icons will remind passers-by of the daily efforts being made by Australia's aid program to make life better for those living in relentless

and grinding poverty not of their making."

In the 2009–10 Budget, the Government underlined its ongoing commitment to increase Australia's Official Development Assistance to 0.5% of Gross National Income by 2015–16.

Book guides grassroots landcare approach

ACIAR's latest publication, *Landcare in the Philippines: a practical guide to getting it started and keeping it going*, has been officially launched in the Philippines. The book shares the first-hand experiences of people involved in the highly successful landcare initiative in the southern Philippines in the form of a guide for landcare facilitators, particularly those working with communities in

developing countries.

The guide is the product of the 10-year Philippines–Australia Landcare Project, which has supported the development of this bottom-up farmer-driven approach



in the upland areas of Bohol and four provinces in Mindanao in the southern Philippines.

Australian project leader Noel Vock, of Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries, says the landcare approach was initiated to help tackle the alarming rate of soil erosion in the region, which was resulting in losses of 50–300 tonnes of soil per hectare every year.

“There are now more than 8,000 farmers involved in landcare in the region, where there has been widespread adoption of conservation farming techniques,” Mr Vock said. “Landcare has now evolved into helping communities in these poor and sometimes isolated areas to address broader livelihood issues such as managing soil fertility, diversifying farming systems, and gaining access to markets.”

Published by ACIAR, in association with the Landcare Foundation of the Philippines, the 140-page book is written by 15 experienced landcare personnel, including two farmers. The book includes more than 70 photos, drawings and stories from landcare farmers and landcare facilitators and staff.

“The guide will help new landcare developers understand and implement landcare principles and processes in their communities. It highlights the collaborative effort central to the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

Marcelino Patindol, who spoke at the launch of ACIAR's landcare book—*Landcare in the Philippines: a practical guide to getting it started and keeping it going*—examines some of the crops that have helped turn his farm around.

Farewell to Norman Borlaug: father of the Green Revolution

Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr Norman Borlaug, widely known for his achievements in lifting wheat productivity in the developing world and as the ‘father’ of the Green Revolution, has passed away aged 95.

Dr Borlaug was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1970 for his work developing high-yielding, disease-resistant seed varieties to provide food for those most vulnerable in the developing world. The Green Revolution, as it is known, is thought to have saved hundreds of millions of lives.

Dr Tony Fischer, a former ACIAR research program manager, worked as part of Borlaug's team at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) during the 1970s. Following are some reflections from Tony about his friend and mentor Norman Borlaug.

Norm was always focused on the impact of his wheat breeding, namely getting improved varieties into farmers' fields and raising their yields and incomes, and reducing hunger. He ran a very tight program that emphasised long hours, hard work and 'hands on' assessment of wheat performance in the field, first in Mexico, but then throughout the world via the novel international testing.

Norm was always close to farmers, a position adopted no doubt in response to his upbringing on a small Iowa farm and well before anthropologists and other academics gave much attention to the importance of on-farm or participatory research for influencing small farmers. Heavy field focus didn't mean he was against science, but he liked to challenge its conventions and fashions. Indeed, he introduced valuable innovations such as the growing of two selection cycles a year in Mexico, the widespread, and ultimately global, use of multi-location yield testing, and the application of wide crossing, reflected in his early embracing of triticale (a product of a wheat–rye cross) for example.

The other unique feature of his



early years in Mexico was the emphasis on the practical training of wheat scientists from Mexico and then from other developing countries. Norm personally dedicated much time to this activity and it inspired an “army of hunger fighters”, who returned to countries where they were later very effective.

Norman Borlaug's commitment to impact meant that as the potential of the Mexican wheats was revealed by testing around the world—especially in South Asia—he became a powerful, courageous and generally effective advocate for radical policy change. He pushed for importing thousands of tonnes of improved seed from across the world, boosting fertiliser supplies, creating floor prices for grain, and promoting agriculture as the way forward instead of heavy industry. His stories of encounters with conservative bureaucrats, Harvard and World Bank economic advisers, and even sceptical prime ministers and other national leaders, were legendary. But with the help of his army, and some supportive local agricultural leaders, he won the day and the revolution in wheat productivity got underway in South Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

Despair had turned into optimism

regarding productivity increases, and the almost four-fold increase in developing-world wheat yields since 1964 (from 0.8 to 3 t/ha) was undoubtedly catalysed by Borlaug's early successes. To witness the warmth of the welcome Norm would receive from crowds of small farmers and officials alike in the Punjab and Pakistan was as exhilarating as it was undeniable proof of his impact. This impact also reached Australian wheat farmers in the form of more productive varieties, and benefited consumers worldwide in the form of cheaper food.

Announcement of the Nobel Peace Prize was cause for a huge fiesta in the old CIMMYT office at Londres 40 in the Zona Rosa of Mexico City, at which I recall Norm quoting at length from the epic Argentine poem ‘Martin Fierro’ about the virtues of sweat of the brow and hard work. More significantly the Nobel greatly expanded the audience who wanted to hear from him, or criticise him, and inevitably drew him into debate on broader agricultural issues in the developing world. He was well prepared and I don't think his judgement—based as it was on agricultural science and a good dose of common sense—was ever off the mark over the almost 40 years of public life, which he willingly, I believe, embraced after the Prize. He had no illusions about the huge task of feeding the world in the face of an unconquered ‘population monster’.

But more than anything he was always ready to speak out on behalf of the hungry and poor and the role of agricultural science, as he did with moving effect at Grains Week in Adelaide a few years ago on a rare visit to Australia, and as he last did at a wheat rust meeting in March 2009 in his beloved north-west Mexico. His ability to thus challenge and inspire people around him, especially young scientists, will surely be our greatest loss with the passing of Dr Borlaug, one of the 20th century's great humanists.

FROM PAGE 33

landcare approach—working with farmers and others in the community to bring about change from the inside out,” Mr Vock said.

Speaking at the launch in the Philippines, Australian Ambassador Rod Smith said: “Over the years this approach has led to changes in attitudes of farmers and their communities, particularly in adopting new farming systems, improved farm incomes and environmental management and preservation.”

Also at the launch in Manila, Claveria farmer Marcelino Patindol, one of the original landcare

farmers, said the landcare journey had been an incredible one for him and farmers like him.

“We have transformed our farms from barren grassland to a forest of timber and fruit trees. The soil is fertile and spring water is flowing from the forest and serving my farm and my household. I owe this to landcare,” Mr Patindol said.

The Philippines–Australia Landcare Project has been funded by the Australian Government through ACIAR and AusAID, and implemented in partnership with five agencies from the Philippines and two from Australia.

Website update: multimedia

ACIAR's website has expanded to include multimedia capabilities for video and audio.

A new online multimedia cocoa feature on the research partnership between Australian and Indonesian research and extension agencies, cocoa buyer Mars Incorporated, and smallholder cocoa growers in Sulawesi is the first multimedia update to the site.

The cocoa feature reports on researchers from La Trobe University, the University of Sydney and Mars Symbioscience who have been working with farmers to select resistant varieties of cocoa

and test them in farmers' fields across Sulawesi.

The cocoa improvement program is part of the Smallholder Agribusiness Development Initiative (SADI) in eastern Indonesia, under the Australian–Indonesia Partnership. SADI is helping smallholder farmers move from being opportunistic and subsistence-orientated towards being profitable and productive smallholder agricultural businesses.

This work, which was featured in the November 2008 – January 2009 issue of *Partners*, is now featured in film on ACIAR's website (www.aciar.gov.au).



Cocoa farmer Pesianus Lesnusa is one of many Sulawesi cocoa growers taking part in on-farm trials of new cocoa varieties and better management techniques to overcome problems of pests, disease and declining soil fertility.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

MONOGRAPHS

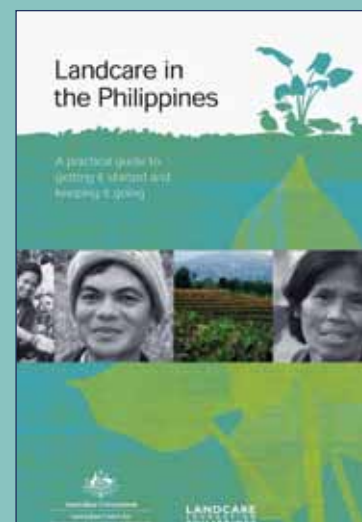
Jorani and the green vegetable bugs

This book, printed in Khmer (hard copy) and English (online), is for primary school children for use in the 'Life Skills' part of the Cambodian School curriculum. It will teach children about integrated pest management (IPM) in crops and the positive impact IPM can have on the environment. *B. Martin and D. White, 2009. Monograph 137 (English) and 137a (Khmer), 48pp.*



Landcare in the Philippines: a practical guide to getting it started and keeping it going

The Australian aid program has been working with the landcare movement in the Philippines for 10 years, encouraging farmers and their communities to take control of their own problems and to implement appropriate solutions. This book provides practical guidelines for all those involved in this important role. *Landcare Foundation of the Philippines Inc, 2009. Monograph 138, 144pp.*



PROJECT FINAL REPORTS

PNG AND PACIFIC

Improving productivity and the participation of youth and women in the Papua

New Guinea cocoa, coconut and oil palm industries G. Curry and G. Koczberski, ACIAR Final Report ASEM/2002/014, www.aciar.gov.au/publication/FR2009-02

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Solomon Islands A. Schwarz, D. Boso, C. Ramofafia, ACIAR Final Report FIS/2003/051, www.aciar.gov.au/FR2009-12

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Identifying economic and social constraints for water management in vegetable production in East Nusa Tenggara and West Nusa Tenggara

Dr T. Ancev, ACIAR Final Report SMAR/2007/219, www.aciar.gov.au/publication/FR2009-04

Contract farming options for shrimp production in eastern Indonesia R. Oktaviani,

N. Nuryartono, T. Novianti, M. Iqbal Irfany, A. Musa Pasaribu and A. Citra Malina, ACIAR Final Report SMAR/2007/226, www.aciar.gov.au/publication/FR2009-05

Abalone industry enhancement in eastern Indonesia A. Fermin, V. Encena II, Agus

Suriawan, Hamka and W. Kusumaningtyas, ACIAR Final Report C2007/102, www.aciar.gov.au/publication/FR2009-07

Development of a vaccine for the control of Gumboro in village and small poultry holdings in Indonesia J. Ignjatovic and L. Parede, ACIAR Final Report

AH/2000/083, www.aciar.gov.au/publication/FR2009-16

Herbicide use strategies and weed management options in Filipino and

Australian cropping S. Marsh, M. Casimero, R. Llewellyn and D. Pannell, ACIAR Final Report SMCN/2003/011, www.aciar.gov.au/publication/FR2009-03

Improving the marketing system for maize and soybeans in Cambodia

R. Fitzgerald, J. Spriggs, Y. Bunhak, U. Buntha, S. Gniel, N. Keosothea and M. Many, ACIAR Final Report ASEM/2003/012, www.aciar.gov.au/publication/FR2009-08

Farming systems research for crop diversification in Cambodia and Australia

B. Martin, B. Farquharson, F. Scott, S. Belfield and C. Phaloeun ACIAR Final Report for ASEM/2000/109, www.aciar.gov.au/publication/FR2009-17

Managing groundwater access in the central highlands (Tay Nguyen), Vietnam

J. Bennett, J. Cheesman, ACIAR Final Report SMCN/2002/015, www.aciar.gov.au/FR2009-10

Assessing the South-East Asian tropical lobster supply and major market demands G. Hart, ACIAR Final Report SMAR/2007/228,

www.aciar.gov.au/publication/FR2009-06

SOUTH ASIA

Increasing the productivity of cattle in India and Australia with rumen

fungal treatments Dr C. McSweeney, Dr K. Sampath, Dr C. Prasad, ACIAR Final Report AH/1997/058, www.aciar.gov.au/FR2009-13

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NEW PROJECTS

ADP/2009/002	Climate change and regional agricultural commodity flows
ASEM/2008/042	Postgraduate scholarship scheme at the University of Technology Lae, Papua New Guinea – Phase 2
FIS/2009/027	Training in soil assessment and scientific writing for aquaculture officers in Papua New Guinea
FST/2006/117	Improving added value and small medium enterprises capacity in the utilisation of plantation timber for furniture production in Jepara region
FST/2009/012	Identification of researchable issues underpinning a vibrant balsa wood industry in Papua New Guinea
PC/2008/003	Strengthening the Fiji papaya industry through applied research and information dissemination
SMCN/2007/040	Building more profitable and resilient farming systems in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam and New South Wales
SMCN/2007/109	Sustainable and profitable crop and livestock systems for south-central coastal Vietnam

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For other customers, please use our online ordering facility at www.aciarc.gov.au, or direct enquiries to our distributors, National Mailing & Marketing, PO Box 7077, Canberra BC ACT 2610, Australia, phone +61 2 6269 1055, fax +61 2 6260 2770, aciarc@nationalmailing.com.au.

Copies of most publications are available as free downloads from the ACIAR website, www.aciarc.gov.au.

ACIAR'S VISION

ACIAR looks to a world where poverty has been reduced and the livelihoods of many improved through more productive and sustainable agriculture emerging from collaborative international research.



The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) operates as part of Australia's international development cooperation program, with a mission to achieve more productive and sustainable agricultural systems for the benefit of developing countries and Australia. ACIAR commissions collaborative research between Australian and developing-country researchers in areas where Australia has special research competence. It also administers Australia's contribution to the International Agricultural Research Centres.

Back cover: While overarching factors such as climate change continue to put pressure on basic food production, new avenues are opening up for research partnerships that are helping farmers in developing countries improve their circumstances through increased access to markets; even local markets, where this Indonesian boy is taking part of his family's maize harvest. PHOTO: BRAD COLLIS



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Research that works for developing countries and Australia

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Front cover: Vietnamese girl in a rice field.