

introductions received from national genebanks, 95.3 percent and 96.5 percent were germplasm; 3.5 percent and 2.2 percent varieties and 1.2 and 0.5 percent wild and weedy relatives in pre- and post-CBD era, respectively. Similarly from CG centres 94.3 percent and 93.4 percent were germplasm; 2.9 percent and 4.4 percent varieties and 2.7 and 2.3 percent wild and weedy relatives in pre- and post-CBD era, respectively. Amongst the national genebanks, USDA, USA was the main supplier. Significant number of accessions were also introduced from Australia, UK, Italy, Germany and Canada.

These results indicate an overall decline of 6.6 percent in the introduction of germplasm during post-CBD period. However, this decline was confined to

the supplies from national genebanks, which suggest of the cautious approach adopted by different countries in sharing of germplasm. Another interesting observation was that despite overall decrease, there was an increase in import of accessions from CG centres, probably because of the attempts on restoration of germplasm from CG centres. Also, the results indicated that 81 percent of germplasm was introduced from technology rich countries, which are not the centre of diversity of respective crops. This might be because of early realization of the importance of plant genetic resources in these countries in crop improvement, leading to collection and conservation from world over.

Prehistoric Plant Introductions in South Asia

KL Mehra¹ and L Costantini²

¹ Former Director, NBPGR, New Delhi-110 012

² Director, Italian Institute for Africa and the East, Rome, Italy

Archaeo-botanical records have revealed an independent beginning and diffusion of Agriculture in Uttar Pradesh, India, in the ninth millennium BC, and the subsequent diffusion /introduction of rice based agriculture into Kashmir, Gujarat, Pirak, Baluchistan and Sind in the third millennium BC. Several crops of Indian origin were domesticated and grown in summer and kharif seasons at several archaeological sites located in the Saraswati river valley. Agriculture also began to be practiced in Mehrgarh, Baluchistan and adjoining southeastern Iran during the seventh–sixth millennium BC and in Afghanistan during the third millennium BC, using local domesticates and introduced crops from Southwest Asia. At the archaeological sites in Gujarat and in the Indus valley in Sind and Punjab, crops of Indian, Southwest Asian and African origins

began to be grown in the third millennium BC. With the decline of the Harappan civilization and the joining of the Satluj river with the Indus river and the Yamuna river with the Ganges river, agriculture spread to Bihar, Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. This presentation discusses the impact of pre-historic plant introductions from Southwest Asia into South Asia, especially the agricultural revolution, using crop rotation for the first time in the world, viz., the growing of introduced crops of Southwest Asian origins in winter and crops of African and Indian origins in summer and kharif seasons. Mention is also made of prehistoric plant introductions from East and Southeast Asian regions into South Asia, although archaeological records are not available to elucidate the time frame of such introductions.