

SRP 7th Annual Plenary Meeting and General Assembly

3 October 2017 / 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Venue: UN Conference Centre, UN Building, Bangkok, Thailand

Meeting Report

1. Opening Remarks

Mark Radka, UN Environment

- Mark Radka (MR), new representative of UN Environment and Co-Chair of the SRP Advisory Committee, opened the SRP 7th Annual Plenary Meeting and General Assembly by welcoming new representatives of member institutions and invited participants.
- MR heads UN Environment's Energy and Climate Branch, within which the Sustainable Rice Platform is now situated programmatically at UN Environment. MR conveyed his appreciation to become part of an alliance that places climate change at the core of its goals and initiatives.
- In his opening remarks, MR emphasized the need for the Sustainable Rice Platform to adapt, in order to keep pace with fast-changing global needs and priorities. In order for the SRP to continue its mission and further realize its goal, MR reiterated UN Environment's commitment to strengthening its institutional support for the initiative.

2. SRP Highlights and Challenges

Bruce Tolentino, International Rice Research Institute

- Following MR's welcome and opening remarks, Dr Bruce Tolentino (BT), Deputy Director General of the International Rice Research Institute and Co-Chair of the SRP Advisory Committee, presented key highlights and challenges facing the Sustainable Rice Platform.
- BT stressed the most important challenge of "How can the Sustainable Rice Platform [as an alliance] effectively respond to the demands of members and external stakeholders?". BT identified three main areas that will require strengthening; a.) Broader stakeholder participation; b.) A science-based approach; and c.) Increased organizational capacity to deliver.
- Representatives of member institutions present at the meeting raised the following questions, comments and suggestions:
 - **Goal:** Matthias Bickel (GIZ) inquired where the SRP stands at the moment vis-à-vis its goal of reaching one million smallholders to adopt sustainable rice farming practices. Paul

Nicholson (Olam International) suggested to present all ongoing and past activities to determine current status and progress.

- **Fund Raising:** In relation to improving capacity and resources for the implementation of SRP activities, PN asked for the group's decision on fund raising, presented at the SRP 6th Annual Plenary Meeting and General Assembly in 2016. Wyn Ellis (WE) noted that while the resource mobilization study conducted in 2016 was important identifying potential opportunities and approaches to resource mobilization, it also highlighted that grants from bilateral funding institutions and foundations remain SRP's strongest opportunities. In order to further improve the Secretariat's capacity to support the membership in offering opportunities for partnerships under such projects, MB suggested to update members regularly so that services, priorities, and available funds could be matched across the network. WE responded that emerging grant opportunities are communicated to members as they arise via the SRP newsletter or separate communications. This offers an important benefit to members planning on SRP-related country level activities, in offering the possibility of leveraging corporate investment through matching donor funding.
- **Governance:** BT commented that while seeking grants from donor agencies represents an appropriate and important strategy, its effectiveness is threatened by the ambiguity of SRP's current governance structure and lack of legal identity. Fundamental questions, such as the following, must be urgently considered:
 - If not UN Environment (as the SRP's current legal entity), who should prepare and submit such proposals; and
 - Who should receive any grants emerging?

3. Activity Report

Wyn Ellis, Coordinator, Sustainable Rice Platform Secretariat (WE)

- A summary of the Sustainable Rice Platform operations and activities was presented by Wyn Ellis, Sustainable Rice Platform Coordinator. The Activity Report highlighted the following progress:
 - **Leadership:** During the Advisory Committee 4-17 on 27 July 2017, Mark Radka was confirmed as the new main representative of UN Environment to the Sustainable Rice Platform, and Co-Chair of the Advisory Committee. Stepping down as Co-Chair representing UN Environment is James Lomax, lead initiator of the Sustainable Rice Platform. JL continues to be actively involved in SRP operations and program development, particularly in strengthening public sector engagement.
 - **Secretariat:** The SRP Secretariat currently comprises the following personnel:
 - Wyn Ellis, Coordinator

- Lea Las Pinas, Communications and Member Liaison Officer
 - Peter Sprang, Technical Coordinator (based at IRRI, Los Banos)
 - Sandra Khananosit, SRP Standard Revision Consultant
- **Working Groups:** At the 6th Annual Plenary Meeting (Singapore 2016), three working groups were established to support the Secretariat in development and implementation of activities, with Secretariat members as leads. Early in 2017, the working groups were convened separately by the working group leads:
 - Lea Las Pinas (Working Group 1: Communications, Outreach and Resource Mobilization)
 - James Lomax (Working Group 2: Policy Development and Incentives for Scale)
 - Peter Sprang (Working Group 3: Farmer Support, Performance Assessment and Assurance).
 - **Membership:** A total of 81 member institutions was reported at the SRP 7th Annual Plenary Meeting and General Assembly, as of 2 October 2017. New applications continue to be received, and are now pending review and approval of membership applications.
 - **Legal:** On 25 April 2017, IRRI submitted an application to the Philippine Trademark Office to register the Sustainable Rice Platform logo in IRRI's name, on behalf of the Sustainable Rice Platform. The application is still pending approval.
 - **2017 Financial Report:** A new member dues structure was approved during the SRP 6th Annual Plenary Meeting and General Assembly, and was therefore consequently implemented in 2017. Since its inception in 2011, the SRP has collected a total of \$581,457 in annual member dues. Total available cash as of October 2017 is \$95,535, with remaining expenditure (earmarked for a strategic visioning exercise and IRRI SSFA) amounting to \$77,000, leaving a net cash balance of \$18,535. In addition, a total of US\$189,000 (less 13% PSC) in receivables from member contributions remains outstanding. Fund management, invoicing and collection has been transferred to UN Environment's Paris office, and the Secretariat continues to engage with the team and private sector members to expedite processing of due diligence, invoicing and collection.
 - **2018 Budget:** It is estimated that the SRP will receive a total of \$365,000 financial contributions in 2018 from its pool of members and donors, of which \$212,000 will be allotted to support core Secretariat functions. The remaining \$153,000 will be committed to support planned activities of the 3 working groups, pending submission of work plans and budget for 2018.
 - **Pipeline Projects:** The Secretariat has worked with internal and external partners to identify new funding opportunities for resource mobilization, to broaden the revenue

base and support programming in 2018 and beyond. Current and pipeline projects and proposals under consideration are categorized as:

- Country-level: Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam; and
- Regional/global: GEF-7 Global Impact Programme, Green Climate Fund, International Climate Initiative and UK Space Agency, Climate and Clean Air Coalition, International Climate Initiative.

4. Working Group 1 Report

Lea Las Pinas, Communications and Member and Liaison Officer, Sustainable Rice Platform Secretariat

- Working Group 1 was established to develop and implement coordinated communication activities that will raise visibility and stimulate stakeholder and target group response. Guided by its overall communication goal of “establishing a broad stakeholder visibility and recognition for the rice sustainability agenda”, Working Group 1 has identified the following overall objectives to support its communication initiatives:
 - **Internal communications:** Facilitate the engagement and participation of existing stakeholders in a multi-stakeholder alliance that drives innovation and creates shared value.
 - **External communications:** Increase awareness among a broad audience on the critical role of rice in protecting the environment, improving smallholders’ livelihoods, and meeting the global demand for food security.
- Available communication materials that could aid both in organizational and members’ communications initiatives include: Awareness video; Brochure; Conference; Digital/web story; Newsletter; Posters; Social media; Website. Supplementary materials include; Participation in events/exhibitions; Feature articles/stories; Joint press releases; and Translation of the SRP Standard into 13 languages.
- Proposed communication campaign for 2018 is an information drive that emphasizes the environmental cost of rice production and benefits of sustainable rice, with an overall goal of mainstreaming the rice sustainability agenda through social media.
- Feedback received from member representatives include:
 - Identify existing communication materials of members
 - Create a list of popular social media platforms per country
 - Determine target groups and identify key messages (i.e. consumers and farmers)
 - Develop communication materials in local languages

5. Working Group 2 Report

James Lomax, Programme Officer, UN Environment

- Working Group 2 is guided by its purpose 'to develop and implement a strategy and work plan to up-scale sustainable and climate-smart rice production at landscape and national levels using the Sustainable Rice Platform's tools and methodologies as a foundation.'
- Working Group 2 coordinates with the other two Working Groups to develop activities that aim to develop innovative policy options and incentives and mainstream SRP tools and methodologies in national rice policies and strategies.
- Included in its accomplishments and scope of work are the following:
 - **Strategic Alignment:** Strategic alliances with IRRI, Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) and 10YFP Sustainable Food Systems Programme have been strengthened
 - **Country Platforms:** Country-level presence and initiatives are being led in Cambodia, Pakistan and Thailand, in cooperation with SRP members
 - **International Fora:** A presentation on the SRP was made at a high-level session by the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi. This Committee comprises all accredited Permanent Representatives to UN Environment and was formally established as a subsidiary organ of the Governing Council, which now known as the United Nations Environment Assembly.
- Areas of concern and importance for Working Group 2 are as follows:
 - **COP23:** Relevant side-events have been identified, in which the SRP could participate. These include the following:
 - Thematic Day on Climate Action: Agriculture, Marrakech Partnership, 10 Nov.
 - 8th Annual Sustainable Innovation Forum 2017, UN Environment, 14-15 Nov.
 - High-Level Engagement on Climate Action: SDG2, Marrakech Partnership, 15 Nov.
 - WAPRO side event, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, 15 Nov.
 - CCAC High-Level Assembly, Climate and Clean Air Coalition, 10-17 Nov.
 - **Visioning Exercise:** Prospective consultants have already been approached, and have been offered the opportunity to present their respective proposals to the Working Group and the SRP membership. Final review and eventual approval will be undertaken at the AC level.
 - **Strategic Alliances:** Working Group 2 will continue to forge and strengthen alliances for IRRI and UN Environment for the SRP, built around joint and complementary activities with international strategic partners such as FAO, UNDP, GRA, 10YFP, CCAC, etc.

- **Country-level Programmes:** Best practices at national level will be further improved and disseminated through country-level programmes and toolkits for national working groups/platforms.
- **Mainstreaming the Rice Sustainability Agenda:** Through collective efforts, Working Group 2 will continuously aim to build the profile of rice and the SRP in international and governmental fora.

6. Working Group 3 Report

Peter Sprang, Technical Coordinator, Sustainable Rice Platform Secretariat

Joel Janiya, Senior Scientist - Extension Agronomist, International Rice Research Institute

Sandra Khananosit, SRP Standard Revision Consultant, Sustainable Rice Platform Secretariat

- Working Group 3 (Farmer Support, Performance Assessment and Assurance) was established to oversee the management of the SRP Standard, development and upgrading of associated tools, and development and implementation of a practical and efficient assurance and performance assessment scheme in partnership with third party product and service providers.
- This year, Working Group 3 took the lead in the organization and implementation of the following activities:
 - **SRP Training Strategy Workshop:** Interested SRP members attended a training strategy workshop in May 2017 at the International Rice Research Institute in Los Banos, Philippines. This workshop was aimed at identifying training needs of SRP members to accompany deployment of the SRP Standard and Performance Indicators. A key recommendation was for SRP to prioritize the review and revision of the SRP Standard and Performance Indicators.
 - **SRP Standard and Performance Indicators Revision Workshop:** From 21-25 August, interested members gathered to review and revise the SRP Standard and Performance Indicators. Sandra Khananosit (SRP Consultant) is leading the process for SRP Standard revision, while revision of the SRP Performance Indicators is led by IRRI experts in a parallel process. As an ISEAL subscriber, the revision process will follow the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Standard Revision. A 60-day public consultation to revise the SRP Standard was launched in 15 September, and will close on 15 November.
 - **ISEAL:** The SRP has become an ISEAL subscriber as a first step towards full ISEAL membership. ISEAL is the global membership association for credible sustainability standards.

- **SRP Assurance Framework:** The development of the SRP Assurance Framework is a strategic priority for SRP, and for Working Group 3. This framework will define the 'rules of the game' for interested service providers to offer certification and verification services based on the SRP Standard. It is expected that the first consolidated draft will be completed by mid-December 2017.
- **Pilot Tests:** Demonstrating impact from pilots conducted by various members, Joel Janiya (International Rice Research Institute) presented positive impacts on yields, farmer income, nutrient use efficiency, water use and GHG emissions. Challenges were also highlighted, such as factors that need to be addressed at landscape or national level. The pilot scores suggest the need for adjustment as part of the current revision of the Standard.
- A recommendation was made to form subgroups within Working Group 3. The subgroups would focus on identified areas such as the Standard, Assurance Framework and Training. This was broadly supported.

7. Member Statements

Representatives of SRP Member Institutions

- A great majority of members voiced their desired outcome for participating in the Sustainable Rice Platform as to contribute to a lasting impact on the sustainability of the rice sector in relation to the environment and farmers' livelihoods. However, in order to realize this aspiration, essential tools and systems must be put in place. Participants shared their confidence that the SRP is moving on the right trajectory towards this goal.

8. Visioning Exercise: Strategic Options for Upscaling (Proposals by Consultants)

Wyn Ellis, Sustainable Rice Platform Secretariat

- The SRP is now at a crossroads. Having successfully launched the core production Standard and Performance Indicators, the organization has set itself an ambitious new 5-year mission to reach and support the uptake of climate-smart sustainable best practice by 1 million farmers by 2021. To realize this aspiration, SRP needs to move implement a major upscaling effort. The change required may be articulated as a shift to a more inclusive, forward-thinking and holistic organization that delivers transformational change across national and international rice and food sectors, via practical tools, incentives and services both within the supply chain itself, and at policy level.
- To do this the SRP must develop a revised and inclusive identity, vision, strategy, funding and governance that can deliver the required influence across the global stakeholder community and

drive wide-scale positive impacts for farmers, for food and water security, and for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

- The SRP Advisory Committee resolved to engage an external consultant or organization to lead a Visioning Exercise ("The Future We Need") in order to shape SRP's organizational and strategic development, and to guide and support this transformation process.
- Given the overarching importance of this exercise on SRP's future organizational development and strategic trajectory, summaries of two leading proposals received (from Rogers MacJohn and Peterson Consulting, respectively), were presented to the Plenary. A final section decision will be made at the Advisory Committee level.

9. 2017 General Assembly

Bruce Tolentino, International Rice Research Institute

- **Agenda item 1: Approval of 2017 Annual Report and Financial Report**

Pending the full 2017 Annual Report, the Activity Report as presented by the Secretariat was duly approved. The complete Annual Report will be submitted upon conclusion of all 2017 activities, by early 2018.

- **Agenda item 2: Election of SRP Advisory Committee Members 2017-2018**

Three seats (1 Government, 1 NGO and 1 private sector) were open for nomination for the SRP Advisory Committee 2017-2018. Incumbent members Kh Ladda Viriyangkura of the Rice Department of Thailand (Government) and Christ Vansteenkiste of Rikolto (formerly VECO, NGO) stood for re-election. Paul Nicholson of Olam International (private sector), whose term was from 2015 to 2017, did not stand for re-election.

A consensus was reached to confirm Kh Ladda Viriyangkura and Christ Vansteenkiste, who both stood unopposed. Three candidates were nominated for the private sector seat: Natasha Straker of Westmill Foods, Jai Sheel Oberoi of LT Foods and Arunika Anggradewi of Dow AgroSciences. Brig. (ret.) Jai Sheel Oberoi was duly elected by ballot of the participants as the new Advisory Committee member representing the private sector with a term from 2017 to 2018.

On behalf of the membership, MR and BT congratulated Kh Ladda Viriyangkura, Christ Vansteenkiste and Jai Sheel Oberoi, as Advisory Committee members, whose term will be from 2017 to 2019. MR and BT likewise acknowledged and thanked Paul Nicholson (Olam) on behalf of the SRP for his many invaluable contributions and leading role in the Advisory Committee during his term. PN expressed that his decision not to stand for re-election is guided by his belief for effecting good governance and allowing new voices at the Advisory Committee. In this context it was recommended to introduce a limit on the number of terms for Advisory Committee members. This will be raised by the Advisory Committee.

Agenda 3: Any other business

None

10. Closing Remarks

Bruce Tolentino and Mark Radka

- SRP Co-Chairs Bruce Tolentino and Mark Radka officially concluded the meeting and general assembly by thanking all members for their commitment and many contributions to our shared goal.

The SRP 7th Annual Plenary Meeting and General Assembly adjourned at 17:00 Southeast Asia Standard Time.