

### 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Development of Drylands organized at Jodhpur

The 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Development of Drylands (ICDD) with the theme of 'Converting Dryland Areas from Grey into Green' was organized at Jodhpur from 11-14 February, 2019 by the International Dryland Development Commission (IDDC) and Arid Zone Research Association of India. The conference was inaugurated by Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Sh. Gajendera Singh Shekhawat on 11 February. It is the 13<sup>th</sup> conference in the series, held for the first time in India as a part of Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of establishment the Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur. More than 450 scientists and stakeholders from 40 countries participated in the conference.

Speaking as Chief Guest at the Inaugural Function of the conference, Sh. Shekhawat highlighted the problems faced by dryland areas as well as their strengths. He pointed out that drylands are very fragile ecosystem and emphasized that land degradation and climate change are becoming two major issues that may pose serious threat to sustainable agricultural production in drylands.



Dr. Adel El-Beltagy, Chairman of IDDC; four Director Generals of International (CGIAR) Institutes viz., Dr Peter Carberry of ICRISAT, Dr Martin Kropff of CIMMYT, Mr Aly Abousabaa of ICARDA, Dr Claudia Sadoff of IWMI, and two former Director Generals of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, Dr R.S. Paroda and Dr Panjab Singh were Guests of Honour on this occasion.

Eminent international and national experts discussed the major challenges before dryland agriculture including climate change, land degradation, desertification and loss in biodiversity. Deliberations were held on improving water productivity, conservation and use of agrobiodiversity, sustainable intensification & diversification, livestock & rangeland management etc. Two evening lectures were delivered by Dr. Ismail Serageldin of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt; and Dr. Rattan Lal of Ohio State University, USA. Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Award for Leadership in Agriculture was given to Dr. John Dixon of ACIAR, Australia during the conference by the TAAS. The Arid Zone Research Association of India presented honorary fellowship to Dr. R.S. Paroda, Dr. Panjab Singh, Dr. B. Venkateswarlu; Dr. Gurubachan Singh and Dr. Rajeev K. Varshney.

The conference was co-organised by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences and supported by several professional societies and CGIAR institutes.