## Using International Standards to Enhance Quality of **Agricultural Training for Sustainable Development** Sponsor: CGIAR & UNU

The interactive course was given jointly by Dr. Jan Beniest of World Agroforestry Centre, Dr. Wayne Nelles of International Potato Centre, and Dr. Thomas Aschoke of UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security.

Dr. Nelles discussed the key challenges, such as a lack of consensus, no clear political mandate, globalization, conflicts between and influence of industrial, chemical, GMO and other lobbies on how we define quality in agriculture. References were made to Education for All goal and the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development promoted by UNESCO in the pursuit of Agenda 21 and WSSD goals to integrate sustainable development principles, values and practices in ensuring quality education and training at all levels, including in agricultural training and education.

Dr. Aschoke elaborated on different aspects of quality in education which included fitness for purpose, consistency, value for money, transformation of learning outcomes. He also focused on a case study called the T'ikapapa Initiative which involved various stakeholders of potato growing in a high Andean region of Peru, linking small scale farmers to new urban markets and taking advantage of potato biodiversity and tap into new market opportunities. It demonstrated different notions of food quality at different stages. ISO standards 9000:2000 and EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) were given as examples of product quality regulations for education and training in general but also applied in the agriculture sector.

Dr. Beniest outlined essential aspects to be addressed in order to assure quality research-based training in agro-forestry: its context and justification, priority setting, hypothesis formulation, and methods/ tools used, results and upscaling. In order to reach out to as many farmers as possible with limited resources, CGIAR has focused on training of trainers and relied on virtual networks of educational institutions - 140 of such institutions in Africa, for example. Blend of face-to-face group training and online training have been used with scientists serving as resource persons. Monitoring and impact assessments were very critical for justifying the need for continuing high-quality training in this area. It was emphasized that good quality training had to be backed up by corresponding quality agricultural research as a prerequisite.

The course explained different steps in the ICRAF training process, starting with: 1) Research diagnosis; 2) Identification of training needs; 3) Training objectives; 4) Developing training plan; 5) Implementation/training action; and 6) Evaluation. Also presented were the international standards/models developed by ISO to serve as reference frameworks being experimented by CGIAR institutions to assure quality education and training.

Given various training challenges faced in agricultural research training by these institutions, the course proposed a number of specific measures for improvement, which included: Developing appropriate quality assurance protocols; Ensuring better coordination within and among relevant training centres; Developing CGIAR training community of practice among otherwise isolated training centres through online research resources depositories and other internet means.