



In the name of God who is kind and merciful

**Statement of the First Nationwide Workshop on Saffron  
Herat Province - Afghanistan  
Date: 14-16 November 2006**

We the participants of the nationwide workshop on saffron in Afghanistan including representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MAI), Ministry of Counter Narcotics, Higher Education Institutions, various provincial departments, ICARDA, DACAAR, FAO, Washington State University, ZOA, saffron growers associations and farmers of Herat Province, while expressing our appreciations to the organizers, consider this initiative as an important and timely event which was definitely needed at this juncture in the development of saffron at the national level. During the course of the workshop, scientific and practical outcomes of research in the area of cultivation, processing, packaging and marketing of saffron, as well as the other important agricultural, economical and social aspects of this crop were exchanged.

In view of the agricultural, economical and social importance of saffron, especially in the current agricultural context of the country when we need beneficial and high-value crops, on behalf of all the participants we would like to propose the following points for further discussion, and as a concept paper, for addressing the cultivation, processing, packaging and marketing needs of saffron at the national level.

- Our current knowledge of saffron is based on variable and uncoordinated research efforts and requires further research in a coordinated and professional manner in the form of climatic adaptability and agronomic research/demonstration trials in different parts of the country.
- As a rule, future research efforts should be conducted jointly with relevant government organizations and, the coordination of research efforts with MAI-Kabul and MAI-provinces should be accelerated.
- The research results of saffron should be shared with farmers and people involved in growing, processing and marketing of saffron using various educational and agricultural extension tools.
- Relevant sectoral ministries, in cooperation and coordination with MAI, should prepare and implement unified, specific and clear strategies and policies

regarding cultivation, processing, packaging, marketing and quality control of saffron.

- Formulating regulations regarding the phytosanitary requirements for import of bulbs (phytosanitary certificate from the appropriate authorities in the exporting country) and quality control standards for exports of saffron.
- Providing the necessary facilities to improve the awareness of saffron growers (women and men) inside and outside the country and using the expertise / knowledge of saffron producing nations.
- Striving to create more employment opportunities for women in cultivation, processing, packaging and value addition of saffron. The necessary facilities and tools for upgrading the professional knowledge of women should be made available.
- Strengthening of the rural communities through establishment of saffron growers associations and providing legal framework for them to operate.
- Establishing service centers for cleaning and drying of saffron at the village level.
- Providing opportunities for quality control of saffron at the national and international level for export of Afghan saffron to international markets and gaining access/ foothold in the global saffron market.
- Ensuring proper communication amongst relevant organizations, international agencies, educational institutes, saffron growers associations and others involved in saffron at the national and international level in order to have complete coordination in this aspect.
- Accelerating the necessary assistance to farmers for the production, harvesting, packaging and marketing of saffron and ensuring that farmers have support of the government authorities to grow saffron.
- Accelerating the international organization's assistance to the relevant government agencies, farmers and saffron growers associations in the areas of cultivation, harvesting, processing, packaging, creation of quality control centers and market research for export of Afghan saffron in the international markets.
- While expressing our sincere appreciations for this unique initiative, we the participants of the nationwide workshop on saffron would like to ask the organizers of this workshop, namely ICARDA-RALF\*, DACAAR, CRS and MAI, to convene future seminars, workshop and scientific events of this type and further assist the participants.

**Prepared by: National Saffron Coordination Committee**

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**\*RALF (Research in Alternative Livelihoods Fund) is a 3-year research program, funded by DFID-UK, managed by ICARDA, and implemented by 25 national and international organizations in 17 provinces of Afghanistan**

**RALF Website: [www.icarda.cgiar.org/RALFweb/RALF.htm](http://www.icarda.cgiar.org/RALFweb/RALF.htm)  
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