**Backgounder – International Potato Center**

* The International Potato Center (CIP) was founded in 1971 as a root and tuber research-for-development institution to deliver sustainable solutions to the world problems of hunger, poverty, and the degradation of natural resources. Headquartered in Peru, it has offices in 23 developing countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It works closely with strategic partners and allies.
* CIP seeks to achieve food security, increased well-being, and gender equity for poor people. It also seeks to accomplish its mission through rigorous research, innovation in science and technology, and the strengthening of capacities associated with root and tuber cultivation and food systems.
* It forms part of the CGIAR Consortium, a global research partnership of organizations committed to a food-secure future. CGIAR research aims to reduce rural poverty, increase food security, improve human health and nutrition, and ensure a more sustainable management of natural resources. Its donors include individual countries and the main international foundations and organizations.
* One of CIP’s lines of work is to develop and promote the use of tools for the support, management and training of farmers, applying participatory methods and using a gender approach. Also, aware of the need to promote better access to the market for producers, work is done with different stakeholders along the value chain, for the development of commercial innovations and their linkaging with domestic and international markets.
* Since 1971 CIP has had the Germplasm Bank where the world potato collection is kept and studied. It currently houses 4,954 specimens of cultivated potatoes, among traditional and improved varieties; besides their wild relatives (2,338) and lines in process of improving (3,683). CIP also conserves and studies the world collection of sweetpotato germplasm (8,049 specimens), as well as 2,526 varieties and wild relatives of other Andean root and tuber crops (achira, ahipa, arracacha, maca, mashua, mauka, oca, ulluco, and yacón). The safe conservation of these genetic resources is carried out in the field and applying in vitro techniques and cryopreservation.
* Over the past 10 years, CIP’s Germplasm Bank has distributed 4,185 unique potato varieties (each variety is distributed once or several times). These have been delivered to Peruvian institutions or farmers and sent to 56 developing countries and 14 developed countries. At present, last generation phytosanitary techniques are being researched to raise the sanitary quality of all the germplasm conserved at CIP, thereby contributing to agriculture and food security.
* The potato breeding program at the International Potato Center has developed new biofortified potato clones with higher iron and zinc contents. The evaluation of the first products of this program has been conducted in collaboration with strategic partners, and currently a group of advanced clones is available that have some 50 percent higher iron and zinc content.
* CIP develops and promotes different appropriate technologies to help small-scale producers improve their potato and sweetpotato production. These include technologies for seed management, disease and pest control, soil and water management, including remote sensing for supporting decision making; and also the development of strategies to promote the consumption, utilization, and value chains of these crops, with the special objective of improving consumers’ nutrition and producers’ incomes, in particular those of women and young adults.
* In partnership with public and private partners, CIP developed and applied the Participatory Market Chain Approach (PMCA), which achieved innovations in three areas: commercial (new products on the market); institutional (competitiveness); and technological (demand). This work has been recognized by the World Bank as a successful example of inclusive value chains, since the smallholder farmers in Peru’s Andean highland region have benefited significantly from the initiative.
* CIP recognizes the need to develop a new linking model that will impact the different dimensions of food security: Availability (native potato varieties improved in production volume and nutrition, as well as quality seed methods); Access (improvement of incomes through production quality and differentiated markets; Use (diets with varieties that have higher zinc and iron contents, and nutrition education approach); Stability (diversified production and consumption, control strategies for pests –moth– and diseases –late blight– that evolve with climate change); Institutional structure (public institutions committed to public investment at the regional and national level with support measures that use the agriculture-and-nutrition approach as a point of reference).