

Profile of invited speakers

Dato' Dr. Othman Omar is a rice breeder of the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI). He is also a member of the advisory committee for INGER (International Network for Genetic Evaluation of Rice) at the International Rice Research Institute. He is involved in the production and promotion of new varieties of rice, agronomic package testing and seed multiplication. Rice varieties released include Muda, Seberang, Manik, MR 84, Makmur, MR 103, MR 106, Ph 9, MR 123, MR 127, MR 159, MR 167, MR 185, MR 211, MRQ 50, MR 219., MRQ 74. He won many awards for his excellent contributions to rice research. He was also the silver medallist of Salon International Des Inventions Geneve.

Dr. Alias Othman has been associated with the rubber industry since 1973, when he was awarded the Malaysian Rubber Research and Development Board Scholarship for a degree in polymer science and technology at the National College of Rubber Technology, London. He obtained his Masters degree in Polymer Engineering from the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London in 1983 and a Ph.D. degree from Loughborough University of Technology, U.K. in Polymer Physics in 1994. His experience in rubber sciences has been very broad, ranging from the production of SMR to rubber compounding and engineering. He has written more than 40 refereed articles. He has also been actively involved with the ISO 17025 and ISO 9001 quality systems and is still the registered auditor with Department of Standard Malaysia. He also won many awards including the Petronas Inventor's Award (1994), Mindex/Innotex '95 (now called I- Tex), Gold Medalist of World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 1995, Bronze Medalist of International Exhibition of Inventions, Geneva (1996) etc. Currently, he is the Director of Technology & Engineering Division (TED) Malaysian Rubber Board.

Dato' Dr. Mohd Basri Wahid has an Executive MBA degree from the Asian Institute of Management (AIM), Manila. He obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Guelph, Canada and M.Sc. and B.Sc. from Lincoln College New Zealand. He began his career as an Agriculture Officer in the Department of Agriculture where he served from 1978 – 1982. In 1982, Dato' Dr. Mohd Basri joined PORIM (now MPOB) as a research officer in the Biology Division. His excellent contribution to the organization as well as to the oil palm industry earned him the respect and recognition of management. He quickly moved up the management ladder becoming Group Leader, Head of Unit, Director of Biology Division, Deputy Director General and now the Director General of MPOB, a position he has held since January 2006. An entomologist by training, Dato' Dr. Mohd. Basri, among other activities, led his Division to evaluate the impact of the oil palm pollinator in Malaysia, conduct R&D on microbial control of bagworm & *Rhinoceros* beetles and formulate the concept of biological control in oil palm plantation. Dato' Dr. Mohd Basri holds several patents and is a life member of the Malaysian Plant Protection Society, a member of Entomology of Malaysia, MARS, AIM Club and alumni member of Lincoln University.

Dr. Ir. Teguh Wahyudi graduated from the Faculty of Food Technology, Bogor Agricultural Institute (IPB) in 1982. Then, he obtained his Master (M. Eng), Food Engineering from the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok in 1990 and completed his Ph.D., Post Harvest Technology, at the Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in 2003. He has been a principal researcher on cocoa and coffee technology since 2004 and is currently the Director of Indonesian Coffee and Cocoa Research Institute (ICCRI).

Amb. Sona Ebai H. is the Secretary General of the Cocoa Producers' Alliance (COPAL), an inter-governmental organization of cocoa producing States accounting for approximately 75% of the world supply of cocoa beans. He holds a Masters degree in Agricultural Economics from Ohio State University. He is currently serving his second and last 5-year elected mandate which ends in 2011. He is a Cameroonian by nationality and has spent over 25 years in cocoa commodities. Prior to COPAL, he was General Manager of the Cocoa and Coffee Board of Cameroon. Amb. Sona has also chaired the Independent Working Group on a Sustainable World Cocoa Economy.

Dr. Harikrishna Kulaveerasingam was born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and completed most of his secondary and all of his tertiary education in the U.K., before moving to the United States to pursue his post-doctoral research career. He moved back to Malaysia at the end of 1991. His first degree (B.Sc.) was in Plant Sciences from the University of London (Wye College), U.K., after which he completed his Ph.D. in Plant Developmental and Molecular Biology at the University of Leicester in the U.K. Dr Hari has held research and academic positions in industry and academic institutions in U.K., U.S.A. and Malaysia. He has over 15 years post-graduate experience in biotechnology with numerous publications and 1 patent to his name. Throughout his career, he has been involved in research in various areas of molecular genetics, genomics and biotechnology including work with microbes, animal and plant systems. Dr Hari joined the Sime Darby Technology Centre in July of 2003, where he is involved in managing research and development in biotechnology. Currently, he is the Senior Vice President II of the centre. Dr Hari plays an active role in local scientific societies, including the Malaysian Society for Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (MSMBB) and is a member of the American Society of Plant Biologists. He is an Adjunct Professor at the Asian Institute of Medicine, Science and Technology, was a member of the board of studies of the International Medical University and is the current chairman of the Malaysian Bio-Industry Organisation.

Dr. A. Sivapragasam earned his B.Sc. in Agriculture (Entomology) from the University of Agriculture, Malaysia; M.Sc. from Nagoya University, Japan; and Ph. D from University Malaya. Since 1978, he has been with the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) at various research centers and in different R&D capacities. Currently, he is the Deputy Director, Rice and Industrial Crops Center and the Head, Pests and Disease Management Program. He is a member of various National Committees and currently Chairman of the Crops Sub-sector under the Science Fund. He has been involved both as a collaborator and consultant in various projects both at the national and international levels such as FAO of the United Nations, CAB International, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). He was thrice recipient of the MARDI Excellent Service Award and a recipient of the Excellent Service Award from the Malaysian Plant Protection Society for his numerous contributions to Plant Protection research and management in the country. He is now the Coordinator of the Coconut R&D program in MARDI; Member of the National Committee for the Development of Coconut Industry under the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry; and Member of the Malaysian delegation to regional meetings of the Asian Pacific Coconut Community (APCC). His current research interest in coconut entails aspects of mixed farming systems and the cultivation of the biofuel crop *Jatropha curcas*.

Dr. Lulie Melling is currently the Director of Tropical Peat Research Laboratory Unit, Chief Minister's Department, Sarawak, Malaysia. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in Geography (Hons.) from the University of Malaya in 1990. She passed her Master of Agriculture Science in Soil Science with a Distinction from the University of Reading, United Kingdom. She earned her Doctor of Philosophy from Hokkaido University, Japan, in 2005. She is a peat soil expert and currently the project leader of the study on the Development of Tropical Peatland for Sustainable Oil Palm production in Sarawak (2008-2012). She is also the Vice- President of the Malaysian Soil Science Society (MSSS) (2007/2009)

Mr Khoo Hock Aun graduated with a Bachelor of Science (Agribusiness) from Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang in 1978 and was a Nuffield Foundation Study Fellow in 1988 with the Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex, United Kingdom where he examined developments in biotechnology: the institutional basis for innovation, the role of government policy and the various approaches to commercialise and finance innovation in the field of life sciences. From 1978 to 1983 he was Staff Writer for Malaysian Business magazine, published then by the New Straits Times Group of Companies and from 1983 –1985 was Head of the Market Research Department and Senior Executive for corporate planning in the Malaysian Overseas Investment Corporation Sdn Bhd; both positions required extensive professional research on economic, business and industry matters. He was subsequently appointed Executive Director of the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia from 1986-87 and concurrently held the position of Executive Director of the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry. From 1989 to 1996, he was the Deputy

Executive Director of the ASEAN Tourism Information Centre established by the ASEAN National Tourism Organisations. From 1996-1998, he was appointed the Executive Director of the ASEAN Business Forum; a regional association of corporations from South East Asia formed with the common objective of promoting intra-regional trade and business co-operation. From 1999-2004 he represented South East Asia on a global service platform for tourism e-commerce, was consultant to a company involved in multimedia advertising and was also Executive Director of the Association of the Computer and Multimedia Industry of Malaysia. He is Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Ark Bio Sdn Bhd, a regional biotechnology company focused on development of improved genetic material and mass propagation of planting material for *Jatropha curcas*, other oil seed plants and organisms which can be utilized as feedstock for the biofuel industry. It also collaborates with research institutes on *Jatropha curcas* agronomy, plant nutrition, farm mechanization, pest and disease management, precision agriculture as well as into alternative uses of the vegetable oil and its by-products. He also leads the Cosmo Biofuels Group which is actively engaged in establishing *Jatropha curcas* plantations, biodiesel downstream processing and trading activities in the Asia Pacific region. He is presently developing markets and partnerships for an oilseed-to-biodiesel supply chain based on the Group's proprietary processing technology. He was Senior Advisor (Regional Strategy and Business Development) 2004-2006 for the South East Asia operations of D1 Oils plc. For the last three years he has developed a strategic interface with related Government agencies in South East Asia overseeing the policy for biofuels and renewable energy. He is also Advisor/Strategist for the International *Jatropha* Organisation.

Dr. Koon Luen, Heong graduated with a B.Sc. (zoology) from University of Malaya; a Diploma of Management Practice in 1982, Institute of Supervisory, Management, London; M.S. (applied entomology) in 1978 and Ph.D. (entomology/systems analysis), Imperial College, University of London, U.K. in 1986. He obtained D. Sc. (entomology - pest management) from the University of London in 2000. Dr. K.L. Heong was research officer (1973-77, 1979-81) and senior research officer (1982-88) in entomology at the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute. He has contributed in the research on insect ecology and integrated pest management. He won the Medal for Agriculture Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Vietnam; Article of the Year, Journal of Applied Communications in 1997; Third World Academy of Science (TWAS) Prize in 2006; World Bank Development Marketplace Award in 2005; Golden Rice Award, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Vietnam in 2003; Green Apple Award for Environmental Best Practices, U.K. in 2003; Excellence Award for Plant Protection - Malaysian Plant Protection Society in 2003; Charles Black Award for exemplary contributions to public understanding of food and agricultural sciences – US Council for Agricultural Sciences and Technology (CAST) in 2003 and the St. Andrews Prize for Environment from University of St Andrews, U.K. in 2003.

Dr. Simmathiri Appanah, a national of Malaysia, graduated with a B.Sc. (Hons) and Ph.D. from the University of Malaya. Following graduation, he joined the Forest Research Institute Malaysia in 1980. He started as a Forest Ecologist and later became responsible for silviculture research, research management and finally served as the Director of the Natural Forests Division. His early work was on the reproductive biology of dipterocarps, the giant timber trees dominating Southeast Asian forests. This seminal work, which received international attention, completely changed our understanding of tree species diversification and their maintenance in the wet tropics of Asia. From these foundations, he shifted his attention to applied ecology and silviculture. His principal studies were on the regeneration of timber species, especially with the processes following harvesting. Through such studies, he laid bare the weaknesses in the selective felling in vogue in Southeast Asian forests, and made several improvements to the silviculture of natural forests that have become common practice currently. He proceeded to work on innovative harvesting techniques as well which potentially can greatly improve on current practices. He has published prolifically, with more than 150 research papers and four books. One of his books on the planting of high quality timber species in Malaysia received much praise, and is the standard reference on the subject. Besides an active research career, he was also the founding editor of the international *Journal of Tropical Forest Science*. This is perhaps the only accredited scientific journal in Malaysia. Following his career in research, he joined the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. His initial work in FAO was

in assisting countries in the region to strengthen their capacity in forestry research. Currently he is working on helping the Asia-Pacific countries to improve their policy, legal and institutional arrangements.

Dr. Hiroyuki Sase obtained his B.Sc. in Applied Biological Science in 1989 from the Faculty of Science and Technology, Tokyo University of Science. He earned his M.A. (Environmental Science) from the Graduate School of Environmental Sciences, University of Tsukuba in 1991. He completed his Ph.D. in 1998 at Department of Production Science and Technology, Graduate School of Science and Technology, Chiba University. His areas of expertise include biogeochemistry, soil science, plant ecophysiology and environmental science. Currently, he is the Chief Senior Researcher of the Ecological Impact Research Department, Acid Deposition and Oxidant Research Center (ADORC), Japan Environmental Sanitation Center (JESC). He is also involved in the Network Center of the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET).

Prof. Dato' Dr. Nasuddin Othman obtained his first degree in Agricultural Economics from the Bogor Agricultural Institute, Indonesia in 1976. He completed his Master of Agricultural Development in Belgium in 1983 and earned his Ph.D. in Farm Management from Scotland in 1991. He has been lecturing in Universiti Teknologi MARA for more than 25 years and is currently the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Students Affairs and Alumni) of the university. He chaired the steering committee in the setup of B.Sc. (Hons.) Plantation Technology and Management and Master in Plantation Industry Management course work programs. These programs were approved and have taken off since 2000 and July 2007 respectively.