

International Seminar on “Women in agriculture Science”

An international seminar on "Women in Agriculture Sciences" was held at PMAS, AAUR on June 22, 2023. The Worthy Vice Chancellor Dr. Muhammad Naeem Saddique graced this seminar with his presence and commended the efforts of organizing team. Dr Aneela Afzal (Associate professor, Department of agricultural Extension) jointly organized the seminar with the special collaboration with Department of Agriculture Extension, National Center of Industrial Biotechnology (NCIB), Centre for Agriculture Strategy and Development (CAS-D), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience (CABI). Highly reputed and renowned scientists from different organizations were invited to this seminar. The event was organized in both physical and virtual modes. The guest speakers were Dr. Maha Arujanan (Global coordinator of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications, ISAAA, and Executive Director of the Malaysian Biotechnology Information Centre (MABIC) and Ms. Viola Gamboa (Philippines Bureau of Plant Industry).



The event began with the recitation of Quranic verses by Dr. Asif Sardar. The introduction of the seminar was delivered by Dr. Abida Raza, a Professor at UIBB and Technical Director at NCIB. She warmly welcomed and expressed gratitude to the invited speakers for taking time out of their busy schedules to participate in the event. Dr. Aneela Afzal (Associate Professor



Department of Agriculture Extension) also conveyed her appreciation to the guest speakers and the audience for attending this informative seminar. While addressing to the audience, Dr Aneela stressed that

Food insecurity has always been considered an economic problem and naturally the

governments looked for an economic solution to this so called economic problem. In order to come up with a lasting solution the poverty must be looked in a different perspective. Poverty is more of a social problem than an economic one. She highlighted how social interventions to poverty alleviation have successfully worked in global context while economic solutions have been unsustainable over the long run. After the inaugural session of the seminar, the guest speakers were invited to share their knowledge. It was an interactive session where the audience enthusiastically participated in discussions.

Dr. Maha presented her perspective on women in the agricultural workforce in Pakistan,



underscoring the significance of adopting a feminist approach. She appreciated women in high-ranking positions in Pakistan's agriculture sector, recognizing them as nation builders. She further shared her research on GMO corn and other agricultural products, emphasizing the invaluable contribution of biotech crops towards food security,

sustainability, and mitigating climate change. Dr. Maha addressed prevailing misconceptions surrounding biotech crops which arise from various factors, including limited understanding of the science behind genetic modification, concerns about potential health and environmental impacts, and misinformation propagated by various sources. She emphasized the need to rectify them to enhance marketability and alleviate food security risks. She concluded her presentation by highlighting Aristotle's theory of persuasion as a means to promote the acceptance of biotech crops and other scientific inventions.

Ms. Viola Gamboa then presented the importance of women in the workplace, emphasizing how women's participation can boost the economy. She compared the status of women in the Philippines with that in Pakistan, noting that Filipino women are more engaged in the workplace to improve their living standards. Ms. Gamboa specifically highlighted the regulatory challenges related to biosafety within the agricultural sector.



Overall, this seminar discussed the importance of women in agricultural science and highlighted the regulatory and communication challenges in the field. It underscored the need for improved regulations and effective communication strategies to promote gender equality and empower women in agricultural science.

The worthy Vice Chancellor Dr. Muhammad Naeem Saddique shared his concluding remarks



about the interactive session with international speakers and the audience, expressing special thanks to the guest speakers and recognizing the role of women in agriculture. He further discussed that the agriculture is crucial for society, providing food and driving economic growth. Women of Pakistan have long played a vital but often

unrecognized role in the sector. Their dedication ensures food security and rural livelihoods. However, they face challenges such as limited access to resources, education, and decision-making power, constraining their potential. Dr. Tariq Mukhtar, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, also shared their



remarks about the seminar, expressing gratitude to the host for generously sharing their knowledge. In addition, guest speaker Chris Rittgers, Agricultural Counselor at USDA Foreign Agricultural Services, shared valuable insights and experiences regarding working with Pakistan and the significant

contributions of women in the agricultural system. At the end, the VC Prof. Dr. Naeem Saddique (AAUR) distributed souvenirs to the guest speakers.





After the seminar, the guest toured the National Center of Industrial Biotechnology (NCIB), where Dr. Abida Raza presented the laboratory facilities and products developed by NCIB.



