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National Organizing Committee, International Grassland Congress

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Sustainable use of grassland resources for forage production, biodiversity and environmental protection

Proceedings–23rd International Grassland Congress

KEYNOTE LECTURES

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FOREWORD

Grasslands, including rangelands and other grazing lands, are among the largest ecosystems in the world and contribute to the livelihoods of more than 800 million people. These grasslands play a major role in the economy of the country as these are used as pastures/forage resource for domestic grazing animals, habitat for wildlife and wonderful place for eco-tourism. These are good source of forage, food, energy with substantial contribution towards carbon sequestration and water harvesting.

In tropical world, particularly developing and underdeveloped countries, the grassland are subsistence resource for large proportion of population. The estimates of grasslands and shrub lands in India vary from 3.7% to as much as 12% of the total area. In many parts of the world, due to heavy grazing pressure, the grasslands are in denuded form and not able to sustain. Hence, comprehensive strategy for rejuvenation of these important resources is required.

23rd International Grassland Congress is, for the first time, being organized in India by Range Management Society of India (RMSI) and ICAR-Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute (IGFRI) on the theme "Sustainable Use of Grassland Resources for Forage Production, Biodiversity and Environmental Protection" during November 20 to 24, 2015 at New Delhi. During the congress deliberation will take place in plenary lectures, key note lectures, forum discussions, research paper presentations and also informal discussion during breaks. The present compilation of Key Lectures is of immense value to scientists, academicians, policy makers and farmers to take grassland development a step forward.

I invite active participation of all researchers, policy makers, farmers, entrepreneurs and students in the congress, as a platform for exchanging ideas, having intense brainstorming and sharing experiences, that would aid in formulating useful policies for all perspective improvement in grassland of world.

Dated the 10th November, 2015
New Delhi

(S. Ayyappan)
Grassland ecosystem is the largest ecosystem in the world, which was the source to all modern food crops and serves as a supporting system for the food and environment security. Spreading over 50 million square kilometers, they constitute more than one third of world land area and 70 percent of world agriculture area. Grasslands are present in all continents and are habitable to the human and livestock populations. In some countries these are primary source of intensive livestock production in contrast to some tropical arid and semi-arid areas where the grassland productivity is not sufficient to sustain the profitable livestock production. The need of time is to utilize these vast natural resources as “Global Resource” with clear understanding of resolving socio-political issues.

Since more than 8 decades, the International Grassland Congress is highlighting the importance of world grasslands through organizing conferences across the globe and has taken lead role in conversing the grassland research for its improvement and further use by other iso-climatic conditions. Grasslands have specific significance to India and Indian subcontinent which represents almost all types of grasslands. Organizing IGC in India provides a great opportunity to the scientists from Indian Subcontinent and many countries in south East Asia/ Africa to participate in the knowledge exchange. Hence, for the first time, International Grassland Congress (XXIII IGC-2015) is being organized at New Delhi, India by Range Management Society of India (RMSI) and ICAR-Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute during November 20 to 24, 2015.

The main essence of the 23rd International Grassland Congress is “Sustainable use of grassland resources for forage production, biodiversity and environmental protection”. The deliberations in the congress are oriented towards following five themes:

1. Grassland Resources
2. Grassland Production and Utilization
4. Biodiversity, conservation and genetic improvement of range and forage species
5. Environmental Issues related to Grassland

These subthemes will be deliberated in 30 specialized technical sessions and in each session two eminent scientist/planner/NGOs will share their experience. The present book is compilation of keynote lectures to be delivered by the eminent grassland workers across the globe. The valuable information presented by the contributors contains a wide range of knowledge on various aspects of grassland science. The experts from different countries were invited for key lectures on focused topics related to following subthemes in order to cover all relevant aspects of grasslands:

- Dynamics of grassland resources – global database
- Global monitoring of grasslands
• Quality, production, conservation and utilization
• Integration of plant protection to optimize production
• Soil-plant-animal-human interrelationships
• Water management to increase grassland and forage production
• Validation and dissemination of traditional knowledge
• Interdependence of grassland and arable lands for sustainable cereal, forage and livestock production
• Seed production, storage, availability and quality
• Grassland-market linkage
• Alternative uses for tropical and temperate grasslands
• Multi-stakeholder learning platforms for grassland management
• Factors affecting grassland and forage resources
• Sustainable use of grassland resources
• Improving grasslands through education and practice
• Policy issues related to sustainable grassland production
• Public-private partnership in managing common property resources
• Plant genetic resources and crop improvement
• Climate change and grassland management

We wish that deliberations during the congress on most important aspects of grassland such as sustainability, productivity and environmental issues will be helpful in making research and development policies for grassland of not only this continent but for whole world.

We wish to extend sincere gratefulness to all the contributors who accepted our invitation and could spare time to prepare this invaluable information. We also wish to thank all those who have directly or indirectly contributed in making our efforts successful.

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The Range Management Society of India (RMSI) was founded in 1978 to promote client-oriented ecologically sustainable range and forage husbandry with economic productivity and to support excellence in scientific research in agriculture with focus on grassland and fodder resources, agroforestry, plant-animal inter-relationships, environment, dairy industry and allied sciences. One of the major objectives of the Society is to provide national and global platform to the scientists, development workers, practitioners, planners and policy makers, industrialists, financial managers and donors related to grassland and fodder resources development for exchange of ideas for the benefit of the humanity. The Society has organized several workshops, seminars, symposia and conferences in the past, in addition to the III International Rangeland Congress in 1988 and International Conference on Agroforestry for the Asia-Pacific region in 1994.

The society publishes a scientific peer reviewed journal “Range Management and Agroforestry” at half yearly interval.

The International Grassland Congress promotes interchange of information on all aspects of natural and cultivated grasslands and forage crops for the benefit of mankind, including sustained development, food production and the maintenance of biodiversity. There are many common elements across these diverse systems and the great benefits of the Grassland Congresses is that people are brought together from diverse fields and this interaction between colleagues facilitates learning that stimulates future research.

An International Grassland Congress normally is held every 4 years, with the presentation and discussion of papers and reports and other activities including the conduct of tours to fulfill the aims of the Congress. Since 1927, the International Grassland Congresses have been the premier event where the current status of grasslands is updated and the latest themes of grassland research and development are presented.