

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ms. Sarina Roffé
Jewish National Fund
212-879-9305 ext 221
sroffe@jnf.org

Dr. Jim P.M. Chamie
IALC Managing Director
520-621-3024
ialc@ag.arizona.edu

IALC Scientists Expertise Makes Mideast Inroads

January 5, 2004 – Tucson, AZ and New York, NY - Despite travel restrictions, regional conflicts and other mitigating circumstances in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Jordan, India and Yemen are receiving the international expertise needed for water reclamation, and agricultural development and training from International Arid Land Consortium scientists under a grant from USAID.

Under the project – Sustainable Development of Drylands - three month-long courses were taught by to 43 Afghans representing the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock, Irrigation, Water Resources and Environment and NGO's. The goal of the training program is to develop Afghan agricultural teachers and researchers with the ability to reach thousands of Afghan farmers over the next four years. The farmers who took the seminars learned how to manage water resources and the latest irrigation techniques, enterprise development and management and agricultural processing and marketing. Upcoming seminars will teach fruit and vegetable preservation, effective orchard management and integrated pest management.

The Afghanistan-Pakistan project is being conducted by University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Drs. Oval Myers, Jr., and John Santas, who led a similar program in Pakistan before aid to Pakistan was cut off in 1994 by the U.S. government.

In India, the IALC team will initiate on-farm water and energy use policy study with local scientists. The IALC team includes scientists from Jewish National Fund , the University of Arizona, the U.S. Forest Service, and South Dakota State University.

In Jordan, members of the faculty as well as graduate students from the University of Arizona are working with government officials and Jordan's Badia Programme to develop water reclamation programs.

The main objective of Yemen mission is to assess the quality and qualifications of the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Sana'a; to learn what their role is and how they relate to the Ministry of Agriculture, the Regional Agricultural Development Authorities and the private sector; and how they undertake and share applied research, provide outreach and extension, train students, and help farmers have a better life. The team is lead by Drs. Octavio A. Ramirez, Bill Gorman and Carlos Rosencrans from New Mexico State University