



Ministerial Summit | 24 June | 2011 | Rome | Italy

Summary Report: Ministerial Summit

OVERVIEW

The inaugural Ministerial Summit of the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases took place on Friday 24 June 2011 in Rome, Italy.

The Summit was an opportunity to bring together Ministers and other representatives from Alliance countries to formally launch the Alliance's working phase. This was marked by the signing of the Alliance Charter, along with presentations from the Chairs of the Alliance's Research and Cross-Cutting Groups, and statements from individual countries. The event was hosted by New Zealand.

This report is a summary of Summit participation and proceedings.



Heads of Delegations at the Alliance Ministerial Summit

PARTICIPANTS

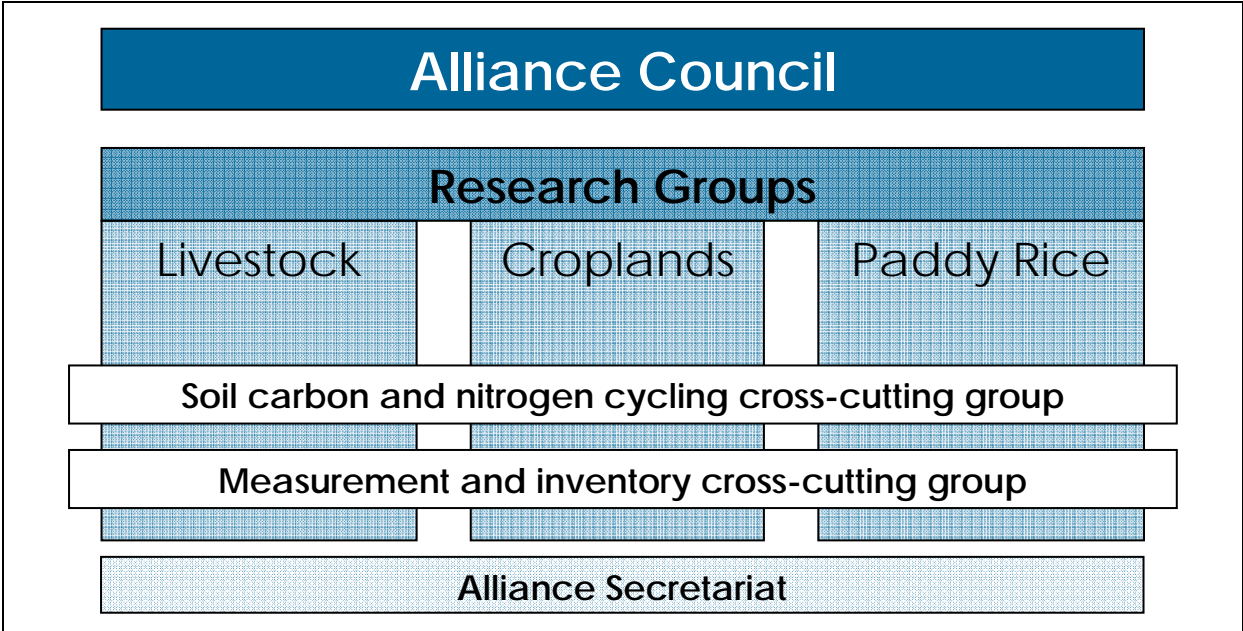
Thirty three countries were represented at the Summit: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand,

Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, UK, USA, Uruguay and Vietnam. Over 130 people attended the event; a list of participants is contained in Appendix One.

SUMMIT PROCEEDINGS

OPENING REMARKS

The Summit was opened by Hon Tim Groser, New Zealand’s Minister for Trade and for International Climate Change Negotiations, who welcomed delegates to the inaugural event. Minister Groser noted how far the Alliance had come since the concept was launched in Copenhagen in December 2009. He outlined the Alliance’s structure (refer diagram below), before handing over to Canada’s Agriculture Minister, the Hon Gerry Ritz, to introduce the Alliance’s Charter (Canada had chaired the governance working group that had developed the Charter over the past twelve months).



Structure of the Global Research Alliance

PRESENTATIONS

Minister Ritz presented the Charter to the Summit, noting its design as simple and flexible, enabling in nature rather than prescriptive. The Charter acknowledges the frontline role of farmers in addressing the challenges of food security and climate change, and strives to deliver outcomes in this regard. It sets up a framework for country membership and a structure for partners to participate in the Alliance’s work. Minister Ritz applauded the contributions of all countries for helping bring the Charter into being quickly and efficiently. A copy of the Charter is provided separately.

Representatives from the countries chairing the Research and Cross-Cutting Groups presented a high-level summary of their work to date and their plans for the future. A copy of this presentation is provided separately.

COUNTRY STATEMENTS

Countries were invited to make statements about their involvement in the Alliance. The individual and collective effort of countries to get the Alliance to this point was recognised around the table. Ministers and representatives noted that what has been achieved to date was impressive. They were clear that the momentum and the spirit of cooperation that has been built in the past 18 months must be nurtured and grown in the coming months and years to ensure that the Alliance continues to be a success.

Countries recognised agriculture's core role in responding to food security, yet its vulnerability to climate change impacts. The Alliance was seen as central to the solutions, helping agriculture face these global challenges through building critical mass in science, technology and knowledge. The Alliance was described as a voluntary network for change – a way for countries to share their experiences and learn from each other. It was noted that the international economic climate means that countries must be smarter and more efficient with their research investments, partnering with others where possible to pool expertise, scale up effort and leverage greater resources. The Alliance provides a framework to help facilitate this. Countries encouraged the Alliance to reach out to new members and to partners outside of governments.

As part of his statement on behalf of New Zealand, Hon David Carter, Minister of Agriculture, announced the New Zealand Government's intention to establish an international research fund totalling NZ\$25 million to support research on mitigating agricultural greenhouse gas emissions from pastoral livestock farming.

CHARTER SIGNING CEREMONY



Delegates then adjourned for the Charter signing ceremony. Of the 33 countries attending the Summit, 31 signed the Charter: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, and Vietnam. Charter signatories are indicated in the participants list in Appendix One.

Russia and Thailand also attended the Summit but for constitutional reasons, were unable to sign the Charter at the time.

There were four Alliance countries that were unable to attend the Summit: Ghana, India, Pakistan and South Africa. The Secretariat will follow up regarding their membership.

Hon Dr Suswono Asyraf, Minister of Agriculture, signs the Charter on behalf of Indonesia

For more information on the Alliance, please visit www.globalresearchalliance.org