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THE INAUGURATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY COLLABORATING CENTRE AT THE *CENTRO AGRICOLTURA AMBIENTE "G. NICOLI"*

Crevalcore, Bologna, Italy - May 11, 2012

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (http://www.iaea.org), in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (http://www.fao.org) manage long time running programs to support Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) projects around the world, with most successful examples as the screw-worm fly *Cochliomyia hominivorax* eradication program in North America, the suppression of several fruit flies species (*Ceratitis* spp., *Bactrocera* spp.) in different continents, the *Glossina austeni* elimination pilot program in Zanzibar. In the 2004 a new field has been opened and progressively expanded focusing on *Aedes* spp. and *Anopheles* spp. mosquitoes.

The IAEA, as any other United Nations (UN) agencies, has the faculty of designing scientific institutions with expertise in specific fields as Collaborating Centre, with the aim to co-operate in the development of technologies and the implementation of programs.

In May 2012 the *Centro Agricoltura Ambiente "G. Nicoli"* (CAA) section of Medical & Veterinary Entomology (MVE) (http://www.caa.it), following a thorough evaluation process, has been designed as a IAEA Collaborating Centre for a period of 4 years, with the objectives to develop, test and validate apparatus and protocols for mass production, for quality control, for field release of mosquito sterile males, and to organize training courses and technology transfer to UN Member States such as Disease Endemic Countries.

During the inauguration ceremony, organized last May 11 at the CAA headquarter in Crevalcore, with the participation of local, regional and national authorities, Mr. **Marc Vreysen**, head of the Insect Pest Control Laboratory FAO/IAEA in Seibersdorf (Austria), presented the basic concepts of the area-wide integrated pest management and illustrated the advantages of including SIT components. Mr. **Qu Liang**, director of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, expressed his full support to the initiative and the hope it may achieve significant advancements on the way of SIT applications. Mr. **Massimo Iannetta**, head of the Technical Unit "Sustainable Development and Innovation of Agro-industrial System" of the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (ENEA), summarized the effort of ENEA from the early '70s for the development of the SIT approach against crop pest such as the Mediterranean fruit-fly *Ceratitis capitata*, and presented the new possible genetic control method based on the exploitation of cytoplasm incompatibility induced by *Wolbachia* parasite.

Finally the political authorities expressed the wish of a successful collaboration with the hope that the new strategy to suppress Asian tiger mosquito *Aedes albopictus* populations, without environmental risks, may become a reality soon.

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