



# **Stock Taking-Current Status Overview of Regional Initiatives**

Rasheed Sulaiman V

APIRAS Learning Workshop  
24-26 January 2023

# A bit of history:

- APIRAS was established in **2011** during the **Regional Forum on Strengthening RAS in Asia Pacific Islands** (14-15 September 2011, SEARCA, The Philippines)
- A follow up meeting was held during 26 **September 2013** during the GFRAS Annual Meeting in Berlin
- During 2014-15, a proposal was developed by APIRAS and GFRAS to see funding from IFAD



# APIRAS Vision and Mission

## Vision

Inclusive and sustainable extension and rural advisory services in the Asia-Pacific Region.



## Mission

Strengthening institutional collaboration among global and regional rural advisory services (RAS) networks towards responsive capacity development, knowledge management, and policy advocacy in the Asia-Pacific Region.



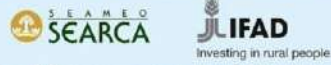
# Initial Funding

- 2016: IFAD “**Strengthening Agricultural Advisory Services (SAAS)**” which was implemented during 2016-2019 in Bangladesh, The Philippines, Fiji
- SEARCA managed the IFAD funds on behalf of APIRAS
- APIRAS had a Secretariat at the College of Public Affairs and Development, University of the Philippines, Los Banos (till 2019)

## SUPPORTING SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN ASIA AND PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION THROUGH STRENGTHENED AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY SERVICES



# Several face-to-face meetings during 2016-2019



Regional Workshop on Knowledge Management, and Monitoring, Evaluation  
12-13 March 2019 | Hotel Chancellor at Orchard, Singapore



APIRAS represented in several consultations too:  
2015: SDC Reaching the Millions  
2018: AFACI Program Workshop on Extension  
All GFRAS Annual Meetings including organization of 2012 Meeting at Manila



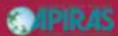
# Emergence of sub-regional networks and country fora



# 2020 onwards



- New but limited IFAD funding (LMP) focusing on strengthening select Country Fora
  - Bangladesh
  - Kyrgyzstan
- No fund for APIRAS level activity (other than AESA managing KM functions focusing on website and social media)
- COVID-19 and only virtual meetings
- During the COVID year, APIRAS published 5 Blogs on what EAS are doing to deal with COVID-19 Disruptions



HOME IN ACTION PUBLICATIONS NETWORKS PROJECTS RESOURCES CONTACT

COVID-19 IN ASIA-PACIFIC

# APIRAS Governance

## Steering Committee

- Siti Amanah (Chair/RAS-SEA)
- Botir Dosov (Vice Chair/CAC-FRAS)
- Souvanthong Namvong (MELA)
- Tommy Tuuamalii (PIRAS)
- Song Yong-Sup (RDA/RICKI)
- Virginia Cardenas (PhileASNet)
- Sekender Ali (BAEN)
- Rasheed Sulaiman V (AESAs)

### Secretariat:

AESA/CRISP

Centre for Research on Innovation and  
Science Policy (CRISP), Hyderabad, India

[www.crispindia.org](http://www.crispindia.org)

## Participation in the GFRAS Board

- Siti Amanah (RAS-SEA)
- Roy Murray-Prior (APEN)



# Current Initiatives at the APIRAS Level

## LMP:

- Knowledge Management
- LMP activities are mostly led by the Sub-Regional Networks and CF

## FAO-TAP (strengthening capacities for agricultural innovation)

Joint Action Plan by APIRAS and APAARI)

- Rapid Appraisal
- Training of Trainers
- Webinar
- Call for Good Practice Notes
- Working Group on Agroecology

## RDA-ACACI RATES Initiative

Initiated, background work done, to be revived this year

## GFRAS led initiatives

- Digital Extension (led by RASSEA)
- Agroecology (contributed to webinars, a GIZ proposal and currently an IFAD-EU proposal, though Asia is not a priority)
- Nutrition Working Group (led by RELASER)

## Regional Work of CRISP in Laos and Cambodia supported by FAO

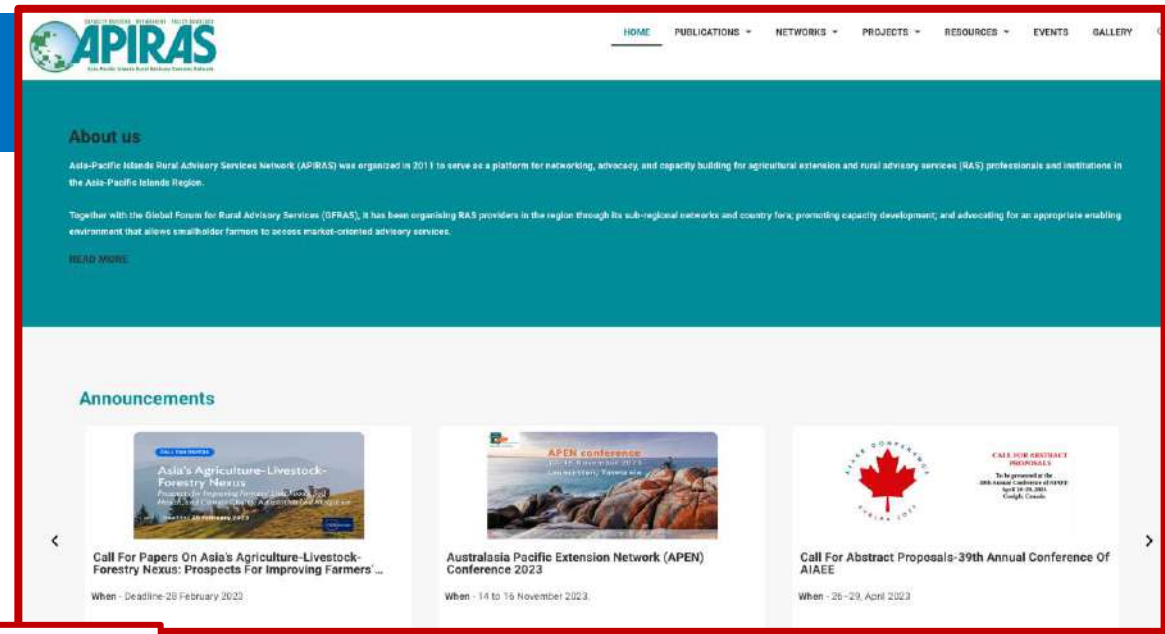
Support to establishment of Country Fora in Cambodia



# Current initiatives at the APIRAS Level

## LMP: Knowledge Management

- Revamped website
- Facebook page



### APIRAS: Resources from 6 Sub-Regions

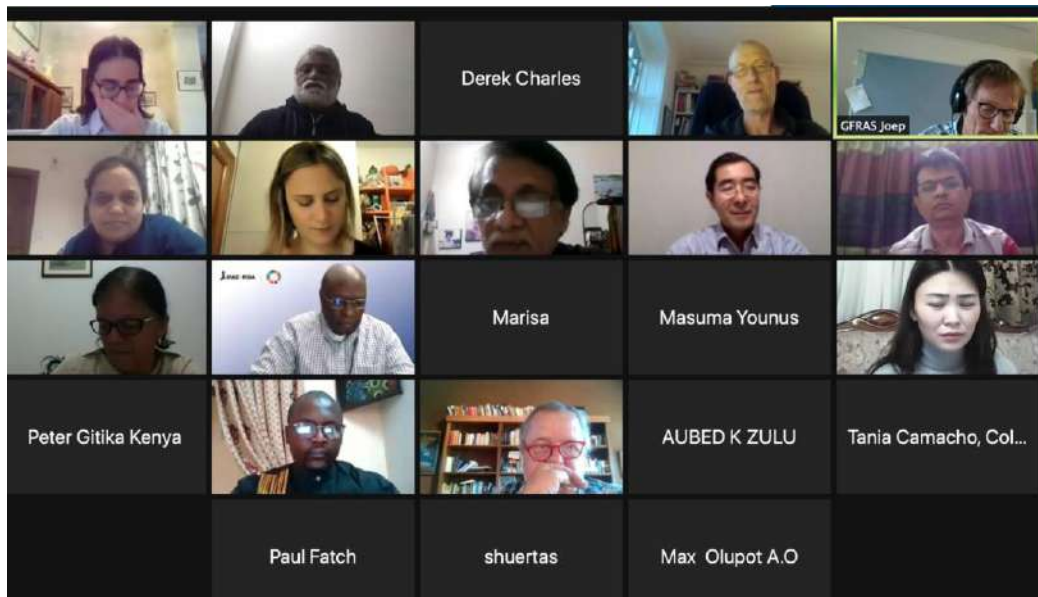
Publications from Sub-Regions	Nov 2020	May 2021	Jan 2023 New Site
Central Asia & Caucuses	45	54	70
South Asia	83	103	110
South east Asia	78	93	104
Australasia- Pacific	45	55	65
East Asia	22	28	40
Mekong	28	72	84
Region-Global- new section in new site			80
<b>Total</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>559</b>



# LMP: Participation in IFAD Supervision Missions and other LMP Meetings

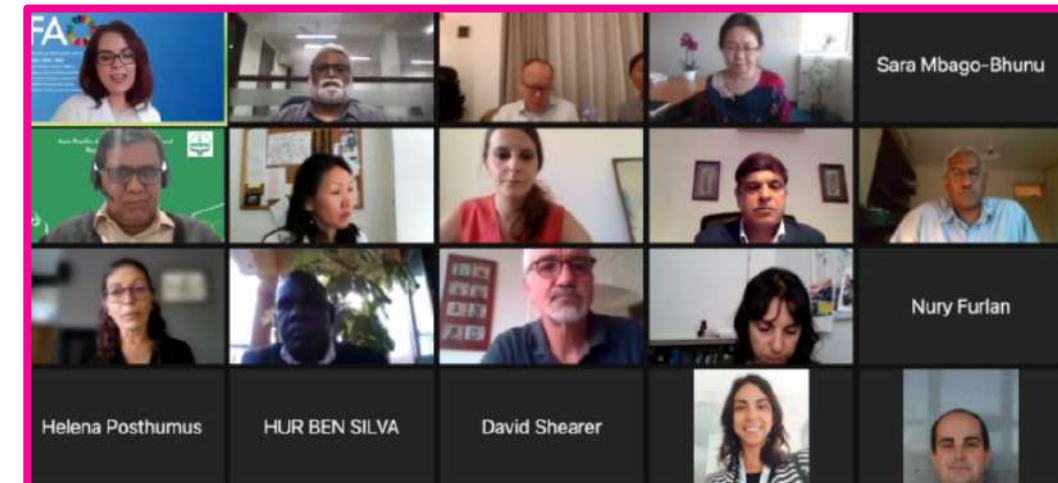
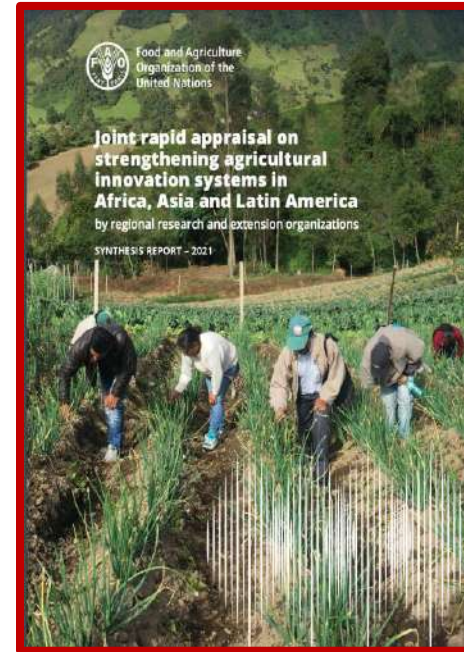
Virtual Supervision Mission: 2-5 December, 2020

Face to Face Supervision Mission, Nairobi, 28 September-1 October 2022



# Joint Work Plan

- **Joint Rapid Appraisal** on strengthening AIS in Africa, **Asia** and Latin America
- Results shared at:
  - Regional Dialogue ‘Capacity Development in Agricultural Innovation Systems (CAIS) in **Asia**, Africa and Latin America: (20 November 2020)
  - TAP side event on **Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems-lessons learnt and future action of the TAP partnership** (5 July 2021)



# Joint Work Plan: ToT on strengthening AIS (19-20 October 2021)




19/20 OCTOBER 2021  
8:30-11:30 CET

**TRAINING OF TRAINERS  
STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURE INNOVATION SYSTEMS IN  
ASIA-PACIFIC: TAP APPROACHES AND TOOLS**

 Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations







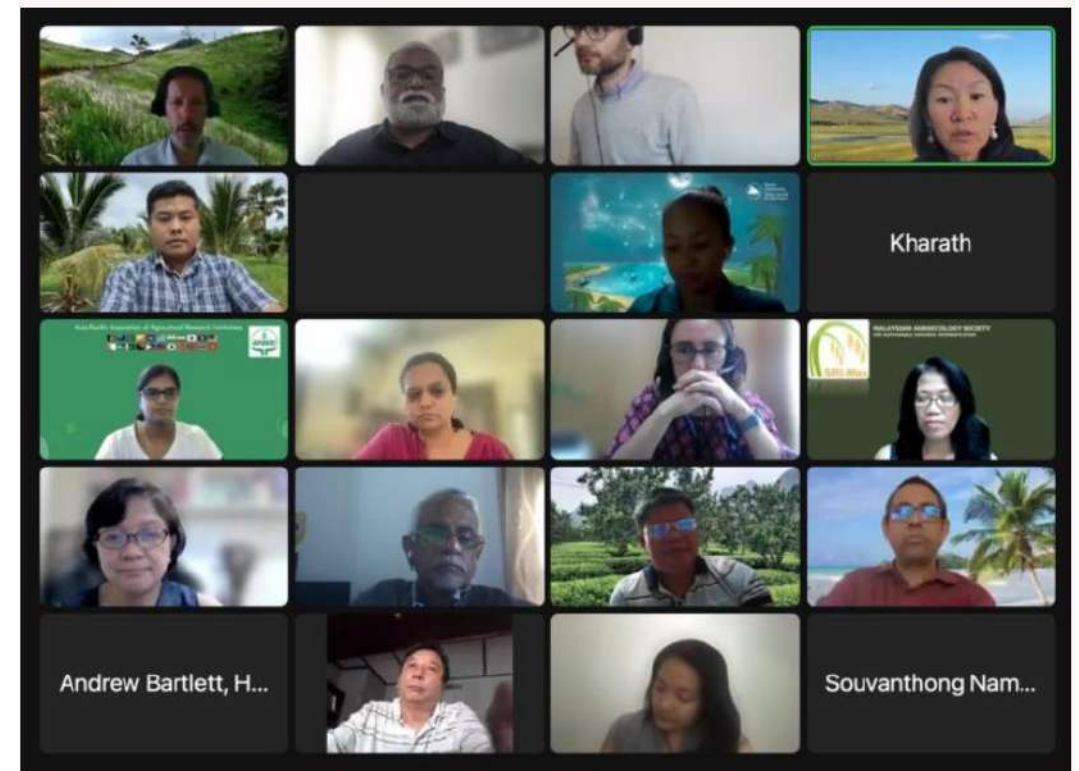
A screenshot of a Zoom meeting grid showing 25 participants. The participants are arranged in a 5x5 grid. The names of the participants are: Niroshinee Shanika Jayasekera, Rasheed Sulaiman Y-APIRAS/I..., Nimisha Mittal, APIRAS/ India, Bucciarelli, Manuela (CIIR), Saravanan Raj, MANAGE, India, kien nguyen van, Mahbuba Moonmoon, Degi Chuluunbaatar, FAO, Epsi Euriga\_Indonesia\_Polban..., Martina, Souvanthong Namwong, Asri Sulistiawati, Indonesia, Yen Nguyen (IPSARD- Vietnam), Helmy Sasulu, Alisher Armanbaev, Avni Mishra (CGIAR GEND..., Gretchen Nas- DOST-PCAARR..., Dr. Norsida Man (Malaysia,..., Khun Bunnath, Eriza Asilo (PCAARRD, Philippi..., Tamo'e Tautu MAF SAMOA, Dipti Adhikari, From Martina to Everyone (chat message), Cristiano Consolini, Italy (FAO), and Masuma Younus.

# Online Survey and WG on Agroecology

Online Survey: **Strengthening AIS: Research Extension Interface**  
(February-March 2022)



First Meeting of the APIRAS-APAARI-FAO **Working Group on Agroecology** (10 June 2022)



# Call for Good Practices: 7 published; Webinar on 21 June 2022

**1** PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE THROUGH GREEN EXTENSION IN LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

**2** STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES TO INNOVATE THROUGH NORTH-SOUTH COLLABORATIVE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

**3** MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACHES FOR ENHANCING COMMAND AREA WATER PRODUCTIVITY IN INDIA

**4** ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL CAPACITIES OF PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS IN INDIA THROUGH STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

**5** STRENGTHENING LAST MILE SERVICE DELIVERY TO SUPPORT SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN INDIA

**6** PROMOTING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE FORESTED UPLANDS OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

**7** PROMOTING CLIMATE SENSITIVE INNOVATIONS IN THE MEKONG DELTA THROUGH DIVERSIFIED PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

**7** PROMOTING CLIMATE SENSITIVE INNOVATIONS IN THE MEKONG DELTA THROUGH DIVERSIFIED PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

**APIRAS**

**APAARI**

## Strengthening capacities of agricultural research and extension organizations to support agriculture innovation in Asia-Pacific

21 JUNE 2022

11:30-13:00 Bangkok Time

[REGISTER HERE](#)

The Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services Network (APIRAS) and the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) in partnership with the Research and Extension Unit of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations are committed to strengthening agriculture innovation systems (AIS) in the Asia-Pacific region for agri-food systems transformation.

In line with this commitment, they would like to cordially invite you to this upcoming webinar to share their recent work in the region, highlighting new survey results on the challenges and opportunities facing national research and extension organizations in strengthening AIS and good practices from regional initiatives that have successfully addressed some of these challenges.

Panelists from research and extension organizations in the Asia-Pacific will discuss the results, linking them with their practical experiences, thus demonstrating potential solutions to key issues facing agriculture innovation in the region.

Contact: [networkapiras@gmail.com](mailto:networkapiras@gmail.com); [apaari@apaari.org](mailto:apaari@apaari.org)

The CAP-AC project has received funding from the European Union under Grant Agreement 1010020195005-734 and is implemented by FAO.

Funded by the European Union



### PANELISTS

 **Souvanthong Namvong**  
National Project Director, Lao Upland Rural Advisory Services (DAEC- LURAS), Lao PDR

 **Gunnar Kirchhof**  
Principal Research Fellow, School of Agriculture and Food Sciences, St Lucia Campus, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

 **Jonnalagadda VR Murty**  
Technical Consultant, 2030 Water Resources Group (WRG), India

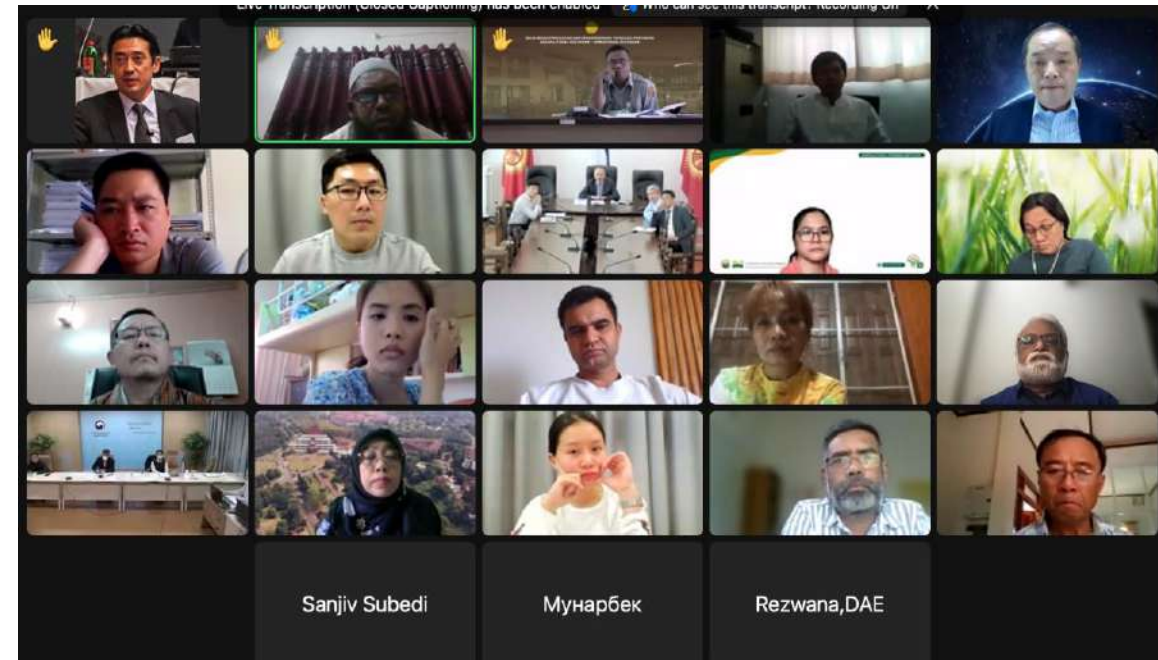
 **Sagar Wadkar**  
Assistant Professor, Centre for Management Education, VAMNICOM, Pune, Maharashtra, India

# RDA-AFACI RATES Project

## Improvement of Rural Agricultural Technology Extension System in Asia (RATES)

- RDA-AFACI LoA with GFRAS
- Support AFACI in the finalisation of the Baseline Study template, Reviewed and commented on the proposals which were revised subsequently
- Meetings on 31 March and 14 April 2022

*First year (2022) activity was delayed, but to continue in 2023*



# What we have achieved at the Regional Level?

- **Enhanced visibility and recognition outside the core EAS actors in the region**
  - Collaboration with APAARI under the TAP-FAO LoA- Wide range of activities- ToT, online survey, webinar, Good Practice Notes etc etc
  - Participation in other GFRAS initiatives (eg: digital extension, WG on Nutrition) including AFACI-RATES project
  - Partnership with FAO-RAP on the working group on agroecology
  - Participation in other IFAD regional initiatives (driven by AESA)
  - APIRAS website emerging as a one stop shop on EAS in the region (could be improved further)
- **More people and organisations aware of APIRAS and it appears to be a solid network for outsiders, thanks to the support of APIRAS focal points**
- *(though internally we face a number of challenges)*

# Challenges 1



No proper hosting arrangement for APIRAS

Limits its ability to raise more resources and share resources across the region

Based on the decision of the APIRAS Steering Committee, held discussions with APAARI on hosting APIRAS (March and May 2021; January 2023) <https://www.apaari.org/>

Still under discussion, but overall positive

*Will have a detailed discussion on 26<sup>th</sup> in the extended SC Meeting*

# Challenges 2

No dedicated resources or full time staff

No resources to pay for a dedicated staff (closely linked to lack of capacity to raise resources).

No resources for regional face to face meetings, so not knowing really our strengths and challenges

*Thanks to GFRAS/SDC for the support to this meeting*

Regional activities are led by AESA/CRISP on behalf of APIRAS with the resources available at their level (*not sustainable in the long run*)

# Challenges 3

## Knowledge Management

No feedback and no input from the sub-regional networks/country fora members

(Are we simply supply driven?)

- We took a decision that all focal points share with us new documents, events, publications, activities related to extension from their regions

*We are yet to receive any real support on this, though we discussed this earlier too.*

- *Not sure how many people are using the APIRAS portal which has several useful knowledge products for extension professionals, faculty, trainers etc*

# Challenges 4

- Unrealised potential:

APIRAS as a regional entity has a potential which is yet to be realized

- Need to recognize that there are certain activities only a Regional Network could do for EAS:
  - Regional Policy Advocacy, Networking, Knowledge Management
  - Raising resources for Asia-Pacific Wide projects/initiatives
  - Partnering with Global Initiatives at the regional levels
- Considering the nature of the region, *we need strong Sub-Regional Networks (SRNs) through which APIRAS could function and reach CFs, But SRNs and CFs face challenges too.*
- *Donors keen to work with CFs without fully appreciating the role of RN and SRN and we have to evolve a strategy to address resource generation keeping all the layers funded*

# To conclude

- APIRAS has evolved slowly over the years, but our activities at all levels are project led..... and this is not sustainable.
- Our progress is slow
- We need to do something more proactive at all levels (Regional, sub-regional and country)
- This week we have an opportunity to collectively put our thoughts to streamline our work in the region (*not sure when we can have a similar opportunity in the near future*)

# THANKS

