



IMPACT OF LAND UTILIZATION SYSTEMS ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

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In many APO member countries, land and other natural resources are intensively used for development, the result of rapid population growth and the push to eradicate poverty. The industrialization and urbanization programs that follow are threatening the land and water resources of these countries. As most cannot conveniently expand their cultivated areas, the alternative is to seek ways to intensify production and increase farmers' income with the existing available land for cultivation. Heavy investments are being made to improve irrigation systems, and land utilization systems are being developed to optimize land and water resource use. Land-use planning, however, must be based on reliable data and the application of scientific knowledge to conserve land resources and improve agricultural productivity.

To review the current status of land utilization systems in its member countries and to identify issues and strategies for improving such systems to enhance agricultural productivity, the APO organized a seminar on "Impact of Land Utilization Systems on Agricultural Productivity" in the Islamic Republic of Iran in November 2000. This publication is a report on the proceedings of the seminar.

The contents comprise the findings of the seminar and the text of the seven resource papers and 11 country reports presented at the meeting. The resource papers dealt with the following subjects: Planning support systems to enhance sustainable land utilization; Issues and problems in improving land utilization systems for sustainable agricultural production: Current land utilization systems and their contribution to agricultural productivity; Land consolidation and productivity improvement; New approaches to land-use planning; and Reforming farming systems in Iran.

The country papers revealed that APO member countries are striving to maximize agricultural productivity to ensure national food security. These countries are also ready and willing to adopt land utilization systems that promote sustainable agricultural production. Strategic agricultural planning to identify and address pressing issues is a generally recognized need. The reports also noted that future sustainable and productive use of agricultural land would hinge on the formulation and enforcement of sound policies and regulations. This publication should prove useful to those engaged in devising land utilization systems and promoting agricultural productivity.

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