

Following the Results of the Conference

To commemorate the 130th anniversary of Nikolay Vavilov, the 4th International Vavilov Conference *N. I. Vavilov's Ideas in the Modern World* was held on 20-24th November 2017 with support from the Federal Agency for Scientific Organizations, Saint Petersburg Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Committee for Science and Higher School of the Government of Saint Petersburg, and Russian Foundation for Basic Research (Project № 17-0420576 Г). The anniversary conference has surpassed everyone's expectations both in terms of representativeness and the content of its scientific agenda.

All in all, 314 participants from 25 countries (Russia, France, Canada, Germany, USA, UK, Japan, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Abkhazia, Belarus, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan) took part in the conference. They represented scientific institutions, international organisations, genebanks, breeding centres, commercial firms, universities and non-governmental agencies, which turned the conference into one of the most significant scientific events.

The opening ceremony as well as the plenary session of the conference took place at the Big Hall of Saint Petersburg Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences (5, Universitetskaya Embankment). The venues for break-out sessions were the Pompeian and Pink Halls of VIR (44, Bolshaya Morskaya Street).



**The Big Hall of Saint Petersburg Scientific Centre
of the Russian Academy of Sciences**



Pompeian Hall of VIR



Pink Hall of VIR

In the opening session, VIR's Director Nikolay Dzyubenko, Vice-Governor of Saint Petersburg Sergey Movchan, Assistant Director of the Federal Agency for Scientific Organisations Ekaterina Zhuravleva, Chief Academic Secretary of Saint Petersburg Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences Georgy Dvas, and Director of the

All-Russian Research Institute for Agricultural Microbiology Igor Tikhonovich made welcome speeches. They emphasized the uniqueness of Vavilov's personality and his substantial contribution to science, which came in advance of his time.



Platform Guests of the Conference (I. Tikhonovich, E. Zhuravleva, N. Dzyubenko, S. Movchan, A. Maksimov, B. Charles)



Welcome Speech by Vice-Governor of Saint Petersburg S. Movchan



Welcoming Address by Chief Academic Secretary of Saint Petersburg Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences G. Dvas

After the greetings, the awarding ceremony followed. Gennady Eremin was awarded a title of Professor Emeritus of VIR. Twelve members of the staff were decorated with N. I. Vavilov medals for their contribution to conservation of plant genetic resources. Among the foreign experts, Marie Haga, Chief Executive of the Crop Trust, was rewarded.



Rewarding of G. Eremin



L. Bagmet Is Receiving N. I. Vavilov Medal

A review of the exhibitions and books dedicated to the anniversary was made by Nikolay Dzyubenko. The writer and publicist Semyon Reznik presented his new book *Such a Short Life. Nikolay Vavilov and His Time*.



S. Reznik and His Book About Nikolay Vavilov

A truly historical event became the presentation by Helen Muller (USA), the daughter of the Nobel Prize winner, American biologist and geneticist Hermann Joseph Muller who

worked with Nikolay Vavilov. She shared her father's memories of Nikolay Vavilov and spoke about those days.



Helen Muller Is Telling About the Relationship Between Nikolay Vavilov and Hermann Muller

In their plenary presentations, N. Dzyubenko, E. Zhuravleva, Elena Popova (Germany) showcased that Vavilov's concept of mobilization and conservation of plant genetic resources in live collections has gained worldwide recognition and has been embodied as genebanks throughout the world. Topicality of Vavilov's heritage was acknowledged by Andreas Börner, representing IPK Gatersleben, Germany, and Aasmund Asdal from the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, Norway.



**Presentation by E. Popova,
Representing the Global Crop Diversity Trust**

The following presentations reflected the development of Vavilov's ideas in various scientific fields – immunology (I. Tikhonovich), taxonomy and evolution (Takao Komatsuda, Japan; Nikolay Goncharov; Isaak Rashal, Latvia), and plant introduction (Peter Tigerstedt, Finland). Issues of crop plant biodiversity conservation and safeguarding old landraces were raised by Aleksey Morgunov, Turkey. The research team from Lyon presented the joint project of CRBA and VIR *The Vavilov Gardens* targeted at popularization of Vavilov's ideas.



Stephane Crozat Is Reporting On *The Vavilov Gardens* Project

On the second day of the plenary session, the promising trends in the use of modern technologies for plant genetic resources studies were covered; methodological aspects were thoroughly addressed by Elena Khlestkina and Darshna Vyas (UK). The current state of various crop plants' gene pools was reviewed by the participants from different countries (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and USA).



Participants of the Plenary Session



**The Question of Deputy Director for Science of VIR
Elena Potokina to the Speaker**

The work of break-out sessions facilitated active scientific discussions within seven sections: *Young Scientists' Workshop*; *N. I. Vavilov's Scientific School (His Associates and Followers)*; *Applied Botany as the Science of Diversity, Evolution, Domestication, Introduction and Use of Cultivated plants and Their Wild Relatives*; *Natural Immunity of Plants to Harmful Organisms*; *Problems of Collecting and Conservation (Ex Situ and In Situ) of Plant Genetic Resources*; *Modern Technologies in the Study of Plant Genetic Resources*; and *Modern Plant Breeding; Problems and Achievements*.



**Work of the Section *N. I. Vavilov's Scientific School*
(*His Associates and Followers*)**



Authors of the Best Presentations at the Section *Young Scientists' Workshop*



Discussion at the Section *Problems of Collecting and Conservation (Ex Situ and In Situ) of Plant Genetic Resources*

All in all, 28 plenary and 105 sectional presentations were given. Poster sessions comprised 67 posters which brought an excellent opportunity for summarizing and the exchange of ideas.



Poster Session

In addition to the scientific programme, photoartist Sergey Kischenko presented his exhibition *Observation Journal* which displayed the history and work of the institute through the prism of contemporary art.



Photoartist S. Kischenko Is Telling About His Works

Also, Head of the Federal Agency for Scientific Organizations Mikhail Kotyukov and Vice-President of the Russian Academy of Sciences Irina Donnik opened the new Laboratory of Health Improvement and Safe Conservation of Vegetatively Reproduced Crop Accessions.



**Ceremonial Opening of the New Laboratory by Head of the FASO
M. Kotyukov and Vice-President of the RAS I. Donnik**

The 4th International Vavilov Conference has convincingly demonstrated that the name and ideas of Nikolay Vavilov are gaining more and more international recognition in the 21st century, and his fundamental research results are being proved true at the modern methodical level.