The re-launch of the AsiaBlight network

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Abstract
Countries in Asia range from the very wealthy to the very poor. A few of these show some of the highest instruction levels in the world. Potatoes are highly nutritious, can adapt to marginal conditions, and produce more food per unit of water than any other crop, making potatoes a key component of food security.

China and India are the two most populated countries in the world. They also are the two most important potato producers, with a third of the world total. Potato is popular in Asia, having 12 countries ranked in the top-20 potato. As in other parts of the globe, Phytophthora infestans (late blight—LB) is the most important pathogen affecting potato production.

AsiaBlight got started in 2015 with the objective of establishing a coarse-scale map of LB in Asia. Since 2016, the CIP-China Center for Asia-Pacific (CCCAP) has been working to implement AsiaBlight network that is self-sustaining and that is able to respond to the expectations of LB stakeholders in different Asian countries, including capacity building regarding LB, and improving LB management through information, communication, collaborations, and research.

AsiaBlight – Who are we?
AsiaBlight has been established as an inclusive network of scientists, companies, farmers and other stakeholders working on potato late blight, in Asia.

The main objective is to better understand and manage late blight and through that, to accelerate the alleviation of rural poverty in Asia, while enhancing potato productivity.

AsiaBlight – 2019 activities

AsiaBlight – Logo contest
CIP-CCCAP organized an AsiaBlight logo contest. Thanks to a generous first prize of $800, we obtained multiple entries from all over China and Asia. After a rigorous selection process, the winning logo was declared the winner. The winning logo depicts potatoes, LB damage, and the geographical diversity present in the Asian continent. Congratulations to Budhith Prakarn Sharma Adhikari, won the contest for AsiaBlight logo. Budhith is a PhD retired Scientist from Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC), National Potato Research Program, Nepal.

AsiaBlight network is active!
Asian representation and expansion:
AsiaBlight’s goals are to become successfully implemented in Asia, starting with China and the extend it to the rest of Asia. In parallel, AsiaBlight will represent Asia in the global LB network, together with EuroBlight, Tizo Latin America, UBlight, and others.

Communication platforms
A WeChat group, a twitter account, and a website: www.asiablght.org will be launched.

Yearly international conference
Asian LB stakeholders will have the opportunity to meet at AsiaBlight’s main conference, which will be focused exclusively to the science of LB. This yearly conference will be held in China this year.

Increase capacity building: training workshops
The workshops will be targeted to Asian potato stakeholders. Thanks to them, they will be better able to manage LB potato thanks to becoming aware of new information and LB-tools.

Research
LB genotyping for population dynamics, host resistance, and fungicide efficacy studies are being set up at CIP-CCCAP’s facilities in Yangping, (China). Collaborations with leading Chinese potato scientists are being set up.

Fund raising
Grant application and our special financial and in-kind sponsorship program will allow AsiaBlight to become financially independent.