

Peruvian government honors Director General

The Peruvian government presented Dr. Hubert G. Zandstra, Director General of CIP, with the Great Cross for Distinguished Service, on May 18 2004. The Great

Cross is one of the highest honors that can be bestowed upon a foreigner by the Peruvian government. The Peruvian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador

Manuel Rodriguez Cuadros, representing the ministry at the ceremony, recognized Dr. Zandstra for his contribution to research on the potato, sweetpotato and



Peru's Ambassador Manuel Rodriguez Cuadros awarding Dr. Hubert Zandstra the Great Cross for Distinguished Service, for his contribution to research on the potato, sweetpotato and lesser known Andean roots and tubers

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lesser known Andean roots and tubers, as well as for his dedication to promoting the integrated management of natural resources in the world's mountain regions, and particularly in Peru.

During the ceremony, which was held at CIP headquarters in La Molina, Ambassador Rodriguez commended Dr. Zandstra's contributions to Peru and in particular his work in the National Working Group on Mountain Ecosystems organized by the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2002, the International Year of Mountains. Mr. Rodriguez also acknowledged Dr. Zandstra's contributing role in Peru's current influence in international fora on biodiversity conservation and the sustainable development of mountain regions.

The minister highlighted the significance of having CIP headquarters in Peru, the country known as the birthplace of the potato. He commended CIP for the quality of its research and for the opportunity it has given to hundreds of Peruvian university students

who have benefited from the high-level training in agricultural research and natural resources offered by the Center.

The minister also emphasized that, just as the populations of Mexico and Central America are known as the cultures of maize, the people of Peru should be known as the culture of the potato, both for the connection of the crop to Peru's ancient Andean heritage, as well as for the global value of the tuber, the world's fourth most important food crop.

Dr. Zandstra expressed his deep gratitude to Peru and to the Peruvian people for the honor. He recalled that one of his most gratifying experiences over the past 13 years was the reintroduction of true potato seed, a technology used by the Incas, in the Callejón de Conchucos in Ancash in 1994. CIP's involvement with this community began at the request of Father Ugo de Censi, who first approached CIP, desperate, after the farmers of the region had lost all of their seed during a

devastating drought. With the seed CIP sent, a potato variety later called Chacasina, the farmers' yields multiplied by five and the community no longer had to constantly search for good quality seed.