



## Letter from the New GFAR Executive Secretary

Dear Colleagues,

Let me first wish you all season's greetings, and a very happy and prosperous 2003. A year that I hope will bring each and every one of us joy, happiness and professional satisfaction.

I arrived in Rome to take up this exciting new position as the GFAR Executive Secretary a couple of days ago, and since then, I have often wondered whether it is the 6-hour jet lag I suffered on the way from Ottawa to Rome, or the amount of information I am absorbing that is responsible for the continuous spinning of my head! In any case, I am enjoying every minute of it, and rapidly getting up to speed on many issues of relevance to the GFAR. Let me seize this opportunity to thank the GFAR staff for all the briefings, explanations and guidance I have received to date from them. I look forward to many more of such interactions over the next few weeks.

I do not have to remind you all that the GFAR was born as far back as in 1996. It has since then made some progress towards addressing its mandate and fulfilling its goals. In this regard, one can compare the GFAR and its recent history to an air plane that has been given the green light to proceed on its journey. GFAR, like the aircraft backed out of the loading dock, makes a few twists and turns, sometimes seemingly retracing its steps, as it heads towards the take off runway. Finally it pauses at the beginning of the runway, and with the throttle gradually opening up, races down the run way, takes off at a steep angle, but quickly settles into a comfortable altitude, while still climbing.

I believe that my predecessor, the GFAR staff, the steering and management committees have taken the GFAR craft to a comfortable altitude, and it is about to reach its cruising altitude. I invite all of you to join me in taking the craft to that cruising altitude, as we address the objectives we have set ourselves, so that we can, through effective partnerships, our trade mark, contribute to agricultural research that will positively impact on our target beneficiaries.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

**Olanrewaju Babatunde Smith**

*New GFAR MT*

## New GFAR Management Team

The new GFAR Management Team was elected during the 12<sup>th</sup> GFAR Steering Committee meeting held on 27 October 2002 in Manila, Philippines.

Dr. **Mohammad H. Roozitalab** of the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa ([AARINENA](#)) was elected Chairman of GFAR with Dr. **Willem Van Vuure** of the European Forum on ARD ([EFARD](#)) and Dr. **Marcio Porto** of Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation ([Embrapa](#)) as Vice-chairs of GFAR and NARS Committee, respectively. The newly elected officers will be joined by Dr. **Olanrewaju Smith** who was recently selected as the new Executive Secretary of the GFAR Secretariat to complete the new Management Team.

The first year of the new team will be an eventful one given initiatives that are lined-up for the next triennium of GFAR. These include the Dakar 2003 Conference in May where about 400 ARD stakeholders are expected to participate; implementation of three projects that will support GFAR stakeholders; launching of several Global Partnership Programmes (GPPs); reinforcing the NARS Committee of GFAR and the challenge to develop a sustainable financing strategy for GFAR.

Dr. **Mohammad H. Roozitalab** was born on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1947 in Kazeroon, Iran and is married and has one daughter. He received his BSc degree in 1970 from University of Tehran in agricultural engineering, soil science and obtained MSc (1974) PhD (1978) in soil science from Oklahoma State University, USA. From 1978-1979, he continued the postdoctoral program at the same university in monitoring ground water fluctuation in Western Oklahoma.

In 1979, Dr. Roozitalab returned to his native country where he was appointed the leader of a land



reclamation and drainage project in Central Iran in 1980. From 1983-1995, he served as Director General of Soil and Water Research Institute in Tehran. In 1995, he was appointed Deputy Head of Agricultural Research Education and Extension Organization ([AREEO](#)), the umbrella institution for national and provincial research institutes and centers in the Ministry of Agriculture. He held the same position until 2001 when all research institutes in agriculture, natural resources, forestry, livestock and fisheries were merged and he was appointed the Deputy Head for International Scientific and Research Cooperation in the restructured Agricultural Research and Education Organization (AREO). He was elected President of Soil Science Society of Iran three times from 1992 to present and is a member of many national research and scientific councils or commissions.

Dr. M. H. Roozitalab has wide experience in agricultural research cooperation at regional and international levels. He was elected the Vice-President of Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA) in 1996-1998 and 2002 and the President of AARINENA in 1998-2000.

He served CGIAR as a member of Consultative Council from 1999-2001. Since 1998 he represented the WANA region in the Steering Committee of Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR-SC) and contributed a great deal in enhancement and development of partnership in ARD at global and regional levels. He was recently elected Chairman of GFAR for a period of 3 years during GFAR-SC Meeting held last October, in Manila, Philippines.

**Willem Van Vuure** is a Dutch national and is currently the General Advisor for International Relations of the Executive Board of the Wageningen University and Research Center ([Wageningen UR](#)) in the Netherlands. He is also the European representative to the GFAR Steering Committee and is member of both the Steering Committees of the European Forum (EFARD) and the Netherlands Forum on ARD.

Previous to this, Willem served as the Executive Secretary European



Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development ([EIARD](#)) of the European Commission in Brussels from 1995 to 1998. He then became the Senior Scientific Officer for International Relations of the Netherlands' Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries from 1990 to 1995 after more than a decade (1978-90) as the Coordinator Agricultural Research for Developing Countries at the Department of Agricultural Research in Wageningen.

Willem was the head/soil scientist of the Soil Survey Department of Suriname's Ministry of Development (1970-78); lecturer/soil surveyor at the Njala University College in Sierra Leone (1968-70); and was a soils surveyor for Agricultural University Wageningen in Turkey (1966). He graduated from the Agricultural University of Wageningen in 1967.

**Dr. Marcio Carvalho Marques Porto**, was born on September 06, 1950 in Salvador, Brazil. He obtained a B.Sc. degree in 1972 at the Federal University of Bahia, Brazil.



A Masters degree in Agronomy was obtained in 1975 at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Dr. Porto obtained a Ph.D. degree on Agronomy and Plant Genetics (Cellular and Developmental Biology) in 1983, at the University of Arizona, USA.

Marcio Porto joined Embrapa in 1973 as a researcher of Embrapa's National Research Center for Cassava and Tropical Fruits, located at Cruz das Almas, Brazil, where he was engaged on research on cassava physiology and Head of the Plant Physiology Laboratory and the Agroclimatology Laboratory, Coordinator of the National Cassava Research Program and Director, Research and Development.

In 1989 he joined the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research ([CGIAR](#)) as a [CIAT](#) scientist posted at Ibadan, Nigeria, with the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture ([IITA](#)), where he stayed until 1994. At that point he joined IITA as the Agronomist and Assistant Coordinator of the Southern Africa Root Crops Research Network ([SARRNET](#)), posted in Maputo, Mozambique and working in the 11 countries members of SADC. In January 1995 he returned to Brazil as

the Director for Research and Development at Embrapa Cassava and Tropical Fruits.

In August 1998 Marcio Porto joined [FAO](#) as the Chief of the Crop and Grassland Service (AGPC), Plant Production and Protection Division, Department of Agriculture, posted at FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy. In February 2001 he returned to Brazil to take the post of Head of Embrapa Secretariat for International Cooperation at Embrapa Headquarters, Brasília.

As the head of Embrapa International Cooperation, Dr. Porto is the main counterpart of Embrapa with global, regional and sub-regional organizations, research institutions and governments of developing and developing countries.

**Dr. Olanrewaju Babatunde Smith**, a citizen of Nigeria and Canada, has been recruited as the new Executive Secretary of GFAR. Dr. Smith joins GFAR from the International Development Research Centre ([IRDC](#)) in Canada, where he had served as a Senior Manager in the Environment and Natural Resources Management sector for the past 13 years. He replaces Dr. Fernando Chaparro who left GFAR in February 2002.



Dr. Smith holds a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree from the University of Liege, Belgium, a Doctor of Tropical Veterinary Medicine (DTVM) degree and a Diploma in Parasitology from the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium, and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in Animal and Poultry Science from the University of Guelph in Canada. After an academic career as Professor of Animal Production and Health at Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria spanning 11 years, he joined IDRC, initially serving as Regional Representative for West and Central Africa based at the IDRC Regional Office in Dakar, Senegal, and eventually moving to IDRC headquarters in Canada where he served as a Research Manager.

Dr. Smith brings to GFAR a wealth of agricultural research and development experience accumulated from years of sustained interaction with national and international agricultural research systems, bi- and multilateral

development agencies and participation in intergovernmental fora (e.g., UN Convention to Combat Desertification). He is married with two children.

O.O.

GFAR Meetings



## Highlights of GFAR Meetings in Manila

The [2002 GFAR October meetings](#) were held in October 2002 in Manila, Philippines.

One of the highlights of the October meeting was the election of Dr. Mohammad H. Roozitalab of [AARINENA](#) as GFAR Chair, Dr. Willem Van Vuure of [EFARD](#) as Vice-Chair and Dr. Marcio Porto of [Embrapa](#) as Vice-chair NARS Committee. (See related articles). They are joined by Dr. Olanrewaju Smith who was recently recruited as GFAR Executive Secretary.

GFAR and NARS Committee meetings discussed issues related to the GFAR 2003 Conference in Dakar; launching of several GPPs; implementation of three projects to support activities of GFAR stakeholders in the region; reinforcing the role of the NARS Committee; and the challenge to develop a sustainable financing strategy for GFAR.

The following are the highlights of the discussion:

- Three projects, to be implemented in 2003, are expected to boost the level of GFAR support to regional/sub-regional fora and to various ARD stakeholders. These projects include: (1) Programme DURAS funded by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs; (2) Strengthening Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) participation in Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) which is expected to be supported by the European Commission/DG AIDCO; and (3) the Global-RAIS (Regional Agricultural Information System) Project to be financed by the EC/DG-Research.
- Coordination among the Facilitation Units on Direct Sowing, Mulch-



A consultation submitted by WAICENT on the AGRIS strategy paper, in order to redefine the role of AGRIS and better coordinate it in the present information landscape has been recently proposed on EGFAR.

In the near future three different discussions will be launched on the following topics:

1. The evaluation of the impact of CGIAR training activities, proposed by the TAC
2. The organization of AARINENA Workshop to be held at the end of February, in order to finalize documents to be presented during the workshop, and
3. A consultation proposed by the European Commission on Terms on reference for a study to formulate guidelines on donor support to development and use of green, red and white biotechnology in developing countries.

*Facilitation Units*

## First Facilitation Units Coordination Meeting

Coordinators of Facilitation Units (FUs), together at GFAR Steering Committee Meeting in Manila, decided to set up a Plan of Action to better coordinate activities between themselves.

The development of different strategies for disseminating information about different activities is distinctive for each unit.

Because FUs are launched under the umbrella of GFAR, one of GFAR's task is to help FUs in developing their strategies and in disseminating their information.

EGFAR has a section dedicated to [Research Partnerships](#) that was designed also to host information about FUs. The section is articulated into 4 main themes and divided in several sub-themes. At present only [Commodity Chains](#) contains information on two sub-themes ([Cocoa](#) and [Underutilized Species](#)). The third sub-theme ([Coconut](#)) is under construction and there are no constraints in adding new pages dedicated to other FUs (i. e. DMC).

The general idea of the pages hosted on EGFAR, is to give users an introduction to the FUs and then to provide access to individual portals that can be developed by FUs.

*Underutilized Species* unit has already commissioned the development of its portal to a consultant and, at present, a [Mock-up](#) of the portal is hosted on EGFAR in order to receive feedback before finalizing it (see related article).

FUs coordinators called attention to the importance to highlight the relationship between FU portals and GFAR; this can be done by placing the GFAR logo on the portal home page or on every page, as coordinators prefer, together with a short statement that should be further discussed between GFAR and FUs.

Additionally, GFAR proposed to create a specific directory in the [Document Repository](#) section, containing all interesting documents (pdf format) submitted by FUs.

FU coordinators expressed their need to better communicate between themselves in order to set up a common strategy for their

development and sharing of their experiences.

One of the new tools that EGFAR offers to all stakeholders is the electronic discussion fora. These are managed in a very simple way by EGFAR Webmaster and can be made public or restricted to a limited number of users.

GFAR has proposed to create a closed forum for FUs coordinators and interested persons indicated by coordinators.

F.B.

*Facilitation Units*



## Underutilized Species Mock-up

The Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species has developed a [Mock-up](#) (test version) of the portal it is intending to launch as soon as possible. The purpose of this tool is to enhance and ease communication and knowledge exchange amongst experts and organizations working on underutilized species as well as between groups or individuals in need of information on the topic. This mock-up is now on line - temporarily hosted by GFAR - so that it can be tested and that potential users can make their comments regarding content, user friendliness, etc. which will help us to further shape it. You are therefore kindly requested to have a look at it and to give us your critical opinion. The website contains a **mock-up questionnaire** which will ease your feedback.

We would be also very grateful if you could contribute in spreading out the information to whom you think may be interested. So please, take a little of your busy time and let us know if you think this tool of information will be useful to you.

We are also collecting information through another [questionnaire](#) for a database "Who-is-doing-what in the field of underutilized plant species" and to identify information needs of research institutions with regard to underutilized plant species.

Access to the database will be available through our web portal. Therefore you are kindly asked to spend another few minutes to

*ICT*

## The Back Office System of EGFAR

The EGFAR back-office (EBO) is an integrated tool for managing the web site.

Its web interface allows users and administrator to update piece of information without knowledge of database or HTML code.

Main features of the EBO are:

- 4 access levels (1 anonymous, 3 password restricted)
- management of database records (events, institutions, related fora)
- management of web pages contents
- strong control on data integrity
- email alerts between users and administrator
- administrator validation before any online publication
- automatic index updates
- extended use of XML and XSL.

EBO will be soon available online

F.B.

L.D.

answer even this questionnaire, save a copy as: "your\_name\_SURVEYGFU" and e-mail to [Paul Bordoni](mailto:Paul.Bordoni) attaching the file. Please, inform other research institutions in your country about it and encourage them to fill it in.

Thank you very much for your kind cooperation.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon  
Coordinator GFU for Underutilized  
Species

Europe



### EARD-Infosys+

InfoSys+ the European information system on ARD – a service to EIARD-enters a new phase.

InfoSys+ also presents a new manager as successor of Hubertus Franzen, who gave rise to this network.

Marc Bernard, the new manager is agronomist and an expert in the application of information and communication technologies. After more than ten years of work as soil scientist, and as scientific coordinator West Africa, Mr. Bernard has for the past 2 years been leading the project Rural Universe Network ([RUN](#)) at ZADI/Germany and now is the head of InfoSys+.



The network InfoSys+ consists of a network of partners from all over Europe providing data on ARD. Together with Paul Harding, the EIARD secretary, InfoSys+ seeks to evolve the information system into a demand driven platform in order to foster ARD cooperation and function as a policy instrument.

Henning Knipschild  
EARD-Infosys+ Technical Coordinator

Europe



### The German Forum for Development Oriented Research (DFOR)

For some time Europe has had a Regional Forum to support agricultural and related research for development. Many of the west European countries have already established national fora for the same purpose. In December 2001 a German Forum was founded. Membership is open to scientific institutes, societies, relevant ministries, organizations supporting research, as well as implementing agencies, NGOs, private firms and other interested public as well as non-governmental organisations. In addition the status of permanent observers has been established, mainly for public institutions, who for whatever reason cannot or do not want to become members.

In September 2002 the [DFOR](#) held its first annual meeting and conference in Bonn. DFOR has now 44 members and 11 permanent observers. The conference was addressed by the General Directors Carlos Sere of [ILRI](#) and Joachim Voss of [CIAT](#). In addition Uwe Werblow of the [EU Commission](#) in Brussels explained their specific programs as related to agricultural and rural development and relevant research. There were good and thought provoking discussions on the statements of all three guests.

The DFOR Conference also adopted a Bonn Resolution, which was forwarded to all members of Parliament in Berlin and to European policy makers in Strasbourg and Brussels. The Bonn Resolution refers to global developments affecting people as well as nature. Persisting hunger and challenges such as climate change and the widening gap between rich and poor call for more, longer term and more efficient work by all parties concerned and involved. To overcome and solve the problems of hunger, the problems of destruction of the environment, scarcity of water and agricultural land, as well as the discrepancy between rich and poor, social tensions, problems of rural migration and urbanisation as well as climatic changes more research is needed. Higher priorities and more support are required at all levels. In

the Bonn Resolution the members of DFOR agree to improve the relevance and efficiency of research. They support the need for closer national and international cooperation, especially with the poorer countries. They are willing to strengthen training activities for young scientists from all countries, and at the same time to make scientific results of their work freely available to all interested parties. Finally the scientists recognise their responsibility to provide solid information and to contribute to increasing public awareness.

The chairman of DFOR's steering committee is Chris Bonte-Friedheim, formerly of [ISNAR](#) and prior to 1990 of [FAO](#). The address of DFOR is:

#### German Forum on Research for Development Deutsches Forum für Entwicklungsorientierte Forschung (DFOR) Secretariat

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#### Co-Secretariat:

Advisory Service on Agricultural  
Research for Development ([BEAF-  
GTZ](#)) Zentralstelle fuer  
Agrardokumentation und information  
([ZADI](#)).

Dr. Bonte-Friedheim,  
DFOR Chair  
Oliver Hanschke  
BEAF/DFOR press officer

Europe



### Netherlands Forum on Agricultural Research for Development

The Netherlands Forum on Agricultural Research for Development (NL Forum on ARD) is a multi-thematic, multi-stakeholder initiative operating within the framework of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR).

It was founded in March 1998 in response to a joint request from the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries and the Ministry for Development Cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The Netherlands Forum on Agricultural Research for Development is meant to strengthen the response of Dutch agricultural organisations to the following global development challenges:

- Poverty reduction,
- Food safety and Food security,
- Sustainable management of natural resources.

The **goal** of the Netherlands Forum on Agricultural Research for Development is to enhance dialogue and collaboration between key players (Ministries, research- and development organisations, private sector, farmers' organisations and NGOs) in the agricultural research arena in the Netherlands.

The **main objective** is to provide a platform enabling dialogue and exchange of experience between various ARD-professionals (policy makers, scientists, consultants, extension specialists, etc.).

More specifically the Netherlands Forum is aimed to:

- Provide transparency of the Netherlands ARD capacity and expertise.
- Regularly provide information on developments in ARD in the Netherlands.
- Improve insight in national and international developments in ARD sector.
- Facilitate active links between national, regional, and international organisations involved in development of ARD policies and programmes in the *North* and *South*.
- Ensure input of Netherlands ARD stakeholders in the discussion on priorities and modalities of ARD at the European level (EIARD, EC-framework program) and indirectly to the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and CGIAR.
- Ensure representation of Netherlands Forum

representatives at Regional, European and Global meetings.

**Main activities** are:

- Facilitating information exchange and access to Netherlands ARD capacity via the Web-site.
- Ensuring data update about/ by the stakeholders.
- Organising meetings to exchange information, discuss viewpoints and improve contacts between different ARD stakeholder groups.
- Maintaining dialogue with European Forum on ARD and other relevant organisations.

**Organisation**

Steering Committee consists of a number of representatives from different stakeholder groups:

Chair: Mr. B. Huijsman  
(Wageningen UR)

Members:

Mr. J. Daane	(ICRA)
Mr. R. Delnoye	(Agriterra)
Mr. A. de Jager	(North-South Centre)
Mr. W. Heemskerk	(KIT)
Mr. D. Kievit	(VNO-NCW)
Ms. V. Pršić	(IAC - Wageningen UR)
Mr. W. van Vuure	(Wageningen UR)

The Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries supports the Executive Secretariat at the International Agricultural Centre (IAC) in Wageningen.

For further information please contact Ms. [Vesna Pršić](#) at the **Secretariat Netherlands Forum on ARD:**

P.O.Box 88, 6700 AB  
Wageningen, The Netherlands  
Telephone: +31.(0)317.495237 234  
Fax: +31.(0)317.495395

Web site: [www.ard-forum.nl](http://www.ard-forum.nl) (under construction) and <http://www.iac.wageningenur.nl/services/networks/forum.htm>

Vesna Pršić  
*Netherlands Forum on ARD Secretary*

*Europe*

## EU Experts Group on Livestock Coordination Meeting Brussels, Belgium 7-8 November 2002

The focal point of the Livestock Facilitating Function (LFF) participated in the 26<sup>th</sup> Co-ordination meeting of the EU Experts Group on Livestock matters in Developing Countries, held in Brussels 7 – 8 November 2002. The Group discussed research for development issues on livestock matters. The LFF focal point presented the recently established Facilitating Functions (FF) at GFAR on Rural Knowledge, Rural Innovation for the Support and Development of SMEs and Livestock Health and Production, funded by [IFAD](#). On behalf of the Italian Ministry of Health, the LFF focal point invited the Experts Group to organize the next meeting in Rome in March 2003. The LFF of GFAR will play the role of facilitating mechanism for the involvement of R&D stakeholders interested in livestock development.

F.A.

*Sub-Saharan Africa*



## 2<sup>nd</sup> FARA Plenary Dakar, Senegal 19-20 May 2003

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of Senegal will host the 2nd Plenary of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA). The co-hosts are the Senegal National Institute for Agricultural Research ([ISRA](#)) and FARA. Participants will come from different institutions/organizations working in and outside Africa such as the Sub Regional organizations ([ASARECA](#), [CORAF](#) and [SADC/FANR](#)), the Advanced Research Institutes (ARIs), the NARS, Universities, NGOs, policy makers, private sector, farmers' organizations and donors. The meeting hopes to convene all major stakeholders to review and plan Africa's agricultural research for development agenda, sustainable financing, state of the art on special topics and endorse FARA's strategy and implementation plan.

The theme is 'Sustaining Africa's agriculture through research for development'.

Participants can register by filling in the [registration form](#). To facilitate the preparation of badges and other logistical arrangements, registration forms should be submitted before 31 Jan 2003 either by post or email.

Invitations to the Plenary are issued by the FARA secretariat and the Senegalese Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Interested parties can contact FARA:

FARA secretariat  
FAO Regional Office for Africa  
P.O. Box GP 1628  
Accra, Ghana  
Tel (233 21) 675000 ext 4500  
Fax (233 21) 7010943  
Email: [monty.jones@fao.org](mailto:monty.jones@fao.org)

The conference will be held at the Meridien President Hotel in Dakar, Senegal.

Source: FARA

West Asia & North Africa



### AARINENA ICT Workshop, Cairo, Egypt

The first of five Regional workshops to be organized in the framework of GLOBAL.RAIS Project, will be held in Cairo, Egypt late February-early March 2002.

[AARINENA](#) Secretariat, AARINENA-RAIS Secretariat, GFAR and [WAICENT](#) are closely collaborating in order to produce useful documents for the discussion. The base for the discussion will be a study paper on Information Strategy for the West Asia and North Africa Region, commissioned by GFAR to Dr. Ahmed Rafea of the Computer Science Department of the American University in Cairo. The focus will be on progress made until now by AARINENA-RAIS Secretariat in the definition and building of the AARINENA website and on the present collaboration between AARINENA and Infosys in the creation of the dynamic component of the site (database structure), based on [Node XML](#), which will allow interactin between AARINENA, [EARD-Infosys](#) and EGFAR.

The discussion will be enriched by contributions from other institutions/organizations which have gone through similar processes in building networks ([ISNAR](#), [IGAD](#)).

The next step in the organization is to launch an electronic discussion based mainly on the draft of this background document in order to receive comments/inputs from all interested Stakeholders of the Region but also from representatives from other RAIS, sharing their experiences, and all interested experts who wish to bring their point of view or simply aware of particular lessons learned and possible failures/mistakes of other systems.

Once a general agreement of the draft version is reached AARINENA will propose an e-discussion on EGFAR in January to last until the 10<sup>th</sup> of February in order to have a short period before the Workshop to organize, integrate and summarize all received inputs.

GFAR and AARINENA warmly invite all interested experts who wish to participate in the Workshop, especially coordinators of other RAIS or similar organizations/networks.

All preparatory documents will be available on EGFAR and AARINENA website.

F.B.  
Tanareh Ebrahimi  
AARINENA –RAIS Secretary

Asia-Pacific



### 7<sup>th</sup> APAARI General Assembly, Penang, Malaysia 2-4 December 2002

The seventh General Assembly of APAARI, held in Penang 2-4 December 2002, was connected with an expert Consultation on *Strengthening of Research Partnerships through Networks and Consortia*. This meeting and workshop was following the sixth executive committee meeting of APAARI, held in Bangkok, 12-14 November 2001. This previous meeting was dedicated to regional priority setting for agricultural research in the Asia Pacific region. Therefore this Penang meeting was

foreseen as the next step following the regional priority setting exercise undertaken at a regional level.

#### Key issues during the Meeting

- In his preliminary presentation during the session I, E. Javier forwarded three suggestions for APAARI: (a) to lead NARS towards networks hubs role, (b) to engage development partnerships and not only research partnerships and, (c) to be strong enough to close some declining networks.
- During the session II, an exhaustive presentation of the strengths and weaknesses of the following Research networks has been achieved: (a) CLAN (Cereals and Legumes Asia Network), (b) CORRA/INGER (Council for partnerships for Rice Research in Asia), (c) RWC (Rice and Wheat Consortium), (d) TAMNET (Tropical Asian Maize Network), (e) GoFAR (Asia Pacific Group of fishery and aquatic research), (f) PGR (Plant Genetic Resources in Asia and Pacific), (g) COGENT (Coconut Genetic Network), (h) UTFANETR (Under utilized Tropical Fruits Network in Asia), (i) BAPNET (Banana Asia Pacific Network).
- During the session III, three presentations were made by APSA (Asia Pacific Seed Association), Monsanto and ICBA (International Centre on Biosaline Agriculture) located in Dubai, UAE. The AGNOC representative was not attending the workshop. During the general discussion, the need to engage partnerships with the private sector (e.g., APSA, etc) but also with civil society organisations and development institutions was clearly underlined.
- The session IV was dedicated to the strengthening of Information and Communication Management for Research Networks. Dr Sahdev Singh, acting as newly recruited scientific assistant to the APAARI Executive Secretary, highlighted the main outcomes of the recent ICT expert Consultation on the Development of the second phase of APAARIS and Meeting of the APAARIS Steering Committee, 24-25 October 2002 in Bangkok. The launching of the second phase of APAARIS was fully endorsed. This session was chaired by the GFAR OIC, who also presented the

recent achievements of the GFAR web site, mainly the web interface with the set of relational databases, the back-office system and the XML node as a multihost search engine. CAB International presented the collaborative programme with APAARIS achieved through the launching of a "Gateway Function". This Gateway Function is expected to provide a friendly access to selected and classified Internet resources, intellectually evaluated. ISNAR presented then its ongoing activities, mainly in strengthening capacity in the area of ICM and knowledge management. Finally ASTI presented the last progress achieved.

- The session V allowed a presentation of (a) the IWMI Challenge Programme Proposal on Food and Water. A pledge of US \$ 70/75 M. is already committed for this C.P., (b) the Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology, APCoAB, and (c) the Inter-regional research network on Cotton.

A final plenary session, led by Stein Bie and Meryll Williams acting as Chair and co-Chair, backed by specific reports of the various Chairs of the previous sessions, reviewed the key critical issues, which had been discussed and prepared a consensual set of recommendations. The main conclusions and recommendations are about to be available on [APPARI website](#).

JF.G.

Asia-Pacific

### **ICT Expert Consultation on the Development of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of APARIS Bangkok, Thailand 24-25 October 2002**

Ten Information Nodal Points representing [APAARI](#) NARS participated in the consultation, as well as International and Regional Organizations like [CABI](#), [FAO](#), [APAFRI](#), [ISNAR](#) and of course GFAR.

Major discussions in the meeting focused on the involvement of NARS in the creation and updating of ARD databases and the role of National Information Nodal Points (NINPs) in the development of a Database on Agricultural Research and Development Indicators.

Specific issues discussed:

#### 1. Present status of APAARI website and reaction from NINPs.

The APAARI home page has been improved and further enriched with new information and links. The site now provides useful information on agricultural R&D activities in the Region such as seminars, symposia, conferences etc, performs gateway functions and serves as a portal to regional research networks. The objective of this component of APARIS is to facilitate access to information resources in the web, both through search engines and by facilitating access to web sites of institutions that work in ARD and to web sites that are related to specialized topics of ARD. This is only a portal service, and not a database. Access to the web sites of the NARS institutions in the Region is being facilitated. Some of the new features on the site include information on NARS database and links to other regional and global institutions. The publications of APAARI are also now available on the website.

An APARIS update is circulated on bimonthly basis through electronic media to all the APAARI members and other Stakeholders giving information on important APAARI activities, agricultural developments, related events and developments in the Region.

NINPs welcomed very warmly these improvements and reported on different national situations where database structures (on institutions, projects, experts, etc.) are already defined and operational, in order to share their experiences and bring inputs to APARIS.

#### 2. Presentation, analysis and possible linkages with other Information Systems.

All International and Regional Organizations, within which ISNAR and CABI, attending the meeting had the opportunity to present their own information systems.

GFAR presented a set of tools (updates on the Discussion Fora, back Office system, NodeXML), to be available soon.

#### 3. Recommendation and Action Plan for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of APARIS.

An issue that was in depth discussed was the role of NINPs and their Terms of Reference.

The Assembly endorsed the following:

- Assess the status and needs of respective NARS, monitor and update to improve relevance and effectiveness of APARIS contributions to APAARI vision and mission.
  - Identify, collect, organize and make accessible information systems within the subject scope of APARIS.
  - Establish and operate information services for national and regional clientele based on APARIS processed information
  - Share skills, knowledge and experiences in the handling and management of information among NINPs.
4. Election of the APARIS Steering Committee.

A Steering Committee for APARIS has been constituted with representation from NARS members from three sub-regions, associate members, IARCs, GFAR and FAO. APAARI secretariat will extend the logistic support and coordination to facilitate the functioning of the Committee. The Steering Committee will serve as a decision making body that will direct the development of APARIS in a strategic and technical sense.

F.B.

Asia-Pacific



### **Updates on South East Asian Forum on Agricultural Research (SEAFAR)**

During the last Senior Officers Meeting of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (SOMAMAF) held on 8 October 2002 in Lao PDR, the 10-member nations agreed to establish the South East Asian Forum on Agricultural Research (SEAFAR) under the auspices of ASEAN and linked with the ASEAN Center for Agricultural Research Databases (CARD).

SEAFAR aims to facilitate knowledge flow and exchange on agricultural research for development in the Southeast Asian sub-region under the

ASEAN framework of mutual cooperation and to serve as a venue for discussing common agricultural research needs in Southeast Asia. Specifically, SEAFAR will endeavour to assist in coordinating sub-regional agricultural R & D; ensure successful partnerships among stakeholders of agricultural research; promote human resource development; and facilitate institutional and electronic fora and knowledge exchange systems.

Under ASEAN procedures, SEAFAR will follow ASEAN protocols and procedures, of which the immediate task is to form a Technical Working Group to be chaired and hosted by one of the ASEAN countries. Discussion on this is going on. Meanwhile, the SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) has formed the Interim Secretariat of SEAFAR with the SEARCA Director and Deputy Director for Research and Graduate Studies serving in a concurrent capacity as SEAFAR Director and Executive Secretary, respectively. Several activities in the pipeline include FAO AGRIS- SEARCA Knowledge Management on-going discussion on introducing AGRIS metadata system in Southeast Asia through the SEAFAR CARD Knowledge Network; involvement of Sun Microsystems in providing assistance to SEAFAR CARD in developing the knowledge network's infrastructure design; and CAB International offering manpower assistance to SEAFAR CARD thru a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), among others. It is hoped that that the SEAFAR CARD Knowledge Network will become a subsystem of APARIS and, hence, EGFAR.

participation in Agricultural Research for Development in West and Central Africa, participating organizations established their network of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the subregion.

The network, called Reseau Ouest et Centre Afrique pour la recherche participative agricole/West and Central Africa Network for the Promotion of Participatory Agricultural Research (ROCAPA/WECANPAR), is envisioned to facilitate efficient and effective partnership based on mutual trust and complementarity, while respecting differences in sharing roles and responsibilities.

The ROCAPA/WECANPAR will focus on activities that respond to the needs of resource poor farmers and gender equity in order to ensure food security, environmental sustainability to reduce poverty through true partnership.

As a coordinating body, WECANPAR/ROCAPA will serve as an interface between NGOs and FOs in the sub-region and will help in enhancing existing farmers and non-government organizations in the sub-region. It will promote the involvement of all stakeholders in priority setting, decision making, planning of research and technology activities. It will endeavour to coordinate research-related activities as well as capacity building of civil society organizations in relation to agricultural research institutes at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. Participants have developed ROCAPA's strategies and workplan. They have also elected Mrs. Bagna Halima Tiousso from the *Coordination nationale de la Plate Forme paysanne du Niger (CNP/Niger)* and Mr. Sonni George of *Association of NGOs (TANGO)* in Gambia as the FO and NGO representatives, respectively, to Conseil pour la Recherche et le Développement Agricole en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre/West and Central African Council for Research and Development ([CORAF/WECARD](#)). *Association pour le Développement des Activités de Production et de Formation (ADAF-Gallè)*, a local Malian NGO based in Bamako, was requested to host the ROCAPA Secretariat until the next General Assembly with Ms Assetou Kanouté as its Acting Coordinator.

The workshop was attended by some 50 representatives from NGO networks, umbrella farmer

organizations, farmer unions and cooperatives from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, The Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. National Agricultural Research Institutions of Mali and Ghana were represented in the workshop as well as three international research centres namely International Fertilizer Development Center ([IFDC](#)), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics ([ICRISAT](#)); and International Institute of Tropical Agriculture ([IITA](#)). The workshop was supported by GFAR, the NGO Committee of the CGIAR, IFDC-Africa, Sasakiwa Global 2000 and CORAF.

O.O.

Farmers' Organizations



## Unity Statement of the Peoples' Street Conference

We, the farmers, representatives of farmers organizations, peoples' movements and civil society from throughout the Philippines and around the world who gather here for the People's Street Conference against the Annual General Meeting of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research ([CGIAR](#)) uphold this statement of unity.

The Street Conference is an independent initiative to claim space for critiques of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and for the presentation of alternatives.

The CGIAR, including the International Rice Research Institute ([IRRI](#)), has consistently failed to meet the needs of poor farmers throughout the world. From the start of the Green Revolution, the research centers of the CGIAR have promoted a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach to research that ignores the knowledge and experience of farmers, farming communities, and indigenous people. The agriculture promoted by the CGIAR, with its dependence on pesticides, fertilizers and other chemicals, is environmentally and socially unsustainable. Farmers have been plunged into debt, their health and the health of their families has suffered, their knowledge, culture and

NGOs



## Network of CSOs in Agricultural Research West and Central Africa launched

Non-government and farmers' organizations involved in agricultural research for development held a sub-regional workshop on 14-16 October 2002 in Bamako, Mali.

During the Sub-Regional workshop on strengthening NGOs and FOs

social systems have been exploited, and the agro-environment of their farms has been severely degraded.

Despite decades of effort by civil society, by farmers and farming communities both requesting and demanding reform of the system, the CGIAR has shown itself unable or unwilling to reform. Despite participation in conferences, on committees, writing papers, and letters, despite interviews, speeches, briefings and meetings, by millions of farmers throughout the world, we do not see any significant change in the CGIAR approach. For this reason we are forced to take to the streets.

The following issues are of particular concern to us:

1. **Accountability and governance:** The CGIAR has never been accountable to whom it claims to serve. This is reflected in its governance structure which is fundamentally controlled by four rich countries of the North. It has never attempted to solve its problems of accountability and continues to refuse attempts to genuinely involve farmers' organizations in its decision-making processes.

2. **The Green Revolution to the Gene Revolution:** The Green Revolution continues to cause immense damage. Far from learning from the mistakes of the Green Revolution, the CGIAR are frantically chasing the tail of the latest mythological "one-technology-fixes-all": genetic engineering. GMOs are associated with genetic privatization through patenting and IPR; genetic contamination; market rejection; threats to farmers' rights through increasing monopolization in agriculture; negative health effects; environmental damage, and a deepening of the structural inequalities between rich and poor. The failure of the CGIAR to defend genetic diversity in the light of contamination is disgraceful.

3. **Trusteeship and biopiracy:** The inability of the CGIAR to protect material it holds in its genebanks from biopiracy is a betrayal of the trust of farmers and farming communities. The FAO-CGIAR trust agreement has been handled inadequately and must be fundamentally restructured. Germplasm, its components and

derivatives must be kept free of intellectual property control.

4. **Worker health and safety:** The relationship between CGIAR centers and the national workforces facilitates exploitation including, in some instances, immunity from national labor laws. Illness and death of workers, contractualization of labor, unfair dismissals and worker harassment result. Workers have the right to stable, ongoing, safe employment with adequate remuneration protected by national and international law.

5. **Business as usual:** The ever strengthening links with the private sector and capitulation to private sector values and agendas brings into question the independence and integrity of the CGIAR. The stated aims of corporations (to make money) and the CGIAR (supposedly to increase food security) are completely different. Biopiracy, the undermining of public-oriented research agendas and a continuing flow of knowledge and resources from the South to the North are the result.

6. **The CGIAR have grossly failed to recognize and enforce farmers' rights despite their rhetoric.**

The CGIAR has shown itself to be unable to change. The use of nice language and pro-farmer rhetoric to clothe the same unsustainable approach does not constitute change. For this reason and the reasons listed above, the Peoples' Street Conference calls for a dismantling of the current international agricultural research system and the reorientation of public funds into responsive, pro-poor, pro-farmer, sustainable approaches.

**New models of agricultural research:**

The work of many of the farmers, Peoples' Organizations and NGOs attending this street conference is illustrative of the wide range of farmer-centered research that is being pursued throughout the world including farmer-breeding initiatives, participative research, and the maintenance and development of community knowledge. Farmer-led and farmer-oriented approaches, however, are chronically underfunded, unsupported and marginalized by the mainstream approach to research.

**Call to action:**

It is imperative that agricultural research is farmer-centered, farmer-led, pro-poor, and rooted in the principle of farmers rights, genuine land reform and food sovereignty. Alternatives to the a mainstream approach to agriculture must be strengthened and developed.

Funding for socially and environmentally sustainable agriculture must be strengthened. We call upon donors to reorient their funding from research on GMOs, hybrids and other damaging technofixes to agro-ecological, farmer led approaches.

Public research on agriculture must be maintained free from the influence (direct and indirect) of profit-oriented private companies. We call on all the international scientific community to join farmers in conducting farmer-led, farmer-oriented participatory research.

We demand that there be no patents on life or any kind of intellectual property. The international scientific community must join peoples' movements in explicitly rejecting patents on life, and in proactively protecting plants, animals and agricultural processes from patents and other forms of IPR.

The international research community must work to ensure adherence to human rights, and labor rights in accordance with all national and international laws.

None of these demands can be achieved without the full implementation of farmers' rights at national and international levels. The international research establishment must recognize and advance farmers' rights in all its policies and actions.

The current system of international agricultural research, particularly the CGIAR, has blighted the development of responsible public science by diverting resources and subverting knowledge, technologies and agendas. There has been a stifling of creativity, a marginalization of farmer science and a tragic narrowing of analysis and goals of research. We call upon ourselves, the international scientific community, donors, and governments to start anew in agricultural research.

**Uphold People's Control on Agriculture! Assert Farmer-centered Agricultural Research and Systems!**

MASIPAG  
Philippines



desertification, and strengthening national agricultural research capacities.

*From the CGIAR website*

ARIs



### **JIRCAS Symposium and PhAction Annual Meeting, Tsukuba, Japan 15-18 October 2002**

The annual [PhAction](#) meeting was organized to coincide with the annual [JIRCAS](#) symposium, held in Tsukuba, Japan, 15- 18 October 2002. GFAR participated actively in the discussions and many positive outcomes were reached. A stronger collaboration between GFAR and the PhAction group was envisaged for the future.

In particular, GFAR will facilitate the creation of a GPP in the post harvest and agroindustries research sector and the topic of *Linking Farmers to the Market* was identified as a strong cross-cutting issue. In addition, the participation in the PhAction meeting and JIRCAS symposium was a good occasion to strengthen the collaboration on the GIPhT initiative undertaken by [FAO/AGST](#) and GFAR in previous months. GFAR is facilitating the involvement of main R&D stakeholders interested in the development of small and medium sized enterprises and discussions on the subject are ongoing with the AGST division of the FAO. The aim will be to also involve additional potential partners from the South and the private sector.

F.A.  
A.S.

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