



Joint Declaration on Programmatic Alignment

**Africa Rice Center (WARD)
Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT) and
International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)**

August 2007, Cotonou, Benin



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1. Given that the current world rice situation has grave implications for sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), because of the following factors:

- World rice reserves are at the lowest level since 1983-84
- World rice prices are rising and are expected to double in the next couple of years
- Africa accounts for only 13% of the world population, but 32% of world rice imports
- About 40% of SSA's demand for rice is being met by imports

Africa Rice Center (WARDA), Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT) and International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) affirm their commitment to bring together the best of science and their experience in Asia, Latin America and Africa to address the major challenges facing Africa's rice sector. The three Centers are supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

2. Based on the recommendations made at the WARDA-IRRI-CIAT Programmatic Alignment Planning Meeting, 27-29 June 2007, Cotonou, Benin, the three international Centers propose the establishment of a sub-Saharan Africa Rice Consortium (SARC), which will consolidate the two existing regional rice networks – West and Central Africa Rice Research and Development Network (ROCARIZ) and the Eastern and Central Africa Rice Research Network (ECARRN). SARC will also embrace those other parts of SSA that are not covered by the existing regional rice networks.

3. The three Centers agree that SARC will provide:

- A platform for collective action by the three CGIAR centers and collaboration with national agricultural research and extension systems (NARES)
- A united front for promoting rice and rice research in SSA
- A common conduit for channeling technology and information from the international research institutions to NARES and farmers in SSA

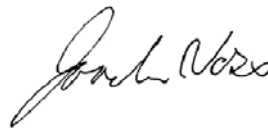
4. The objectives of SARC are to:

- Maximize the level of coordination among the three Centers and their interaction with NARES in the rice sector in Africa
- Provide better access of farmers to improved seeds and technologies

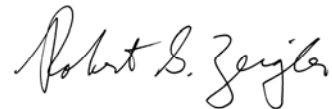
- Develop a critical mass of trained scientists, thereby enhancing Africa's capacity in rice research
 - Improve knowledge sharing and training
 - Achieve increased economies of scale through reduced transaction costs in rice research in Africa and globally
 - Maximize possible spillover benefits in Asia and Latin America in terms of germplasm use
5. The Centers propose that a SARC Steering Committee should be formed, which would be composed of representatives from all the stakeholders. The Steering Committee would include NARES and the Director of Research from each of the three international Centers. The Consortium Secretariat would be based at WARDA.
 6. The Centers agree that joint rice research and development activities recommended at the WARDA-IRRI-CIAT Programmatic Alignment Planning Meeting, 27-29 June 2007, Cotonou, Benin would be carried out under the SARC framework through Working Groups based on the Task Force model that was successfully used by the ROCARIZ rice network.
 7. The following 5 Working Groups are proposed, with the provision of adding new Working Groups when necessary: 1. Plant Breeding; 2. Post-harvest Technologies; 3. Seed Systems and Extension; 4. Socio-economics and Policy Support; and 5. Natural Resource Management.
 8. The Centers hope that all political, financial and technical authorities, particularly in Africa, will strongly support the establishment and the success of SARC.
 9. The Centers express deep appreciation to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for providing financial support for the programmatic alignment, part of which was used for the Planning Meeting. The Centers agree that the rest of the funds will be used for meetings, coordination and research activities of SARC.



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Recommendations of the WARDA-IRRI-CIAT Programmatic Alignment Planning Meeting

27-29 June 2007, Africa Rice Center (WARDA), Cotonou, Benin

1. Further the programmatic alignment by:
 - Standardizing varietal screening
 - Broadening the genetic base of rice materials
 - Intensifying the exchange of visits of scientists
 - Continuing the involvement of Boards of Trustees of the three Centers in the programmatic alignment process e.g., selected WARDA Board members to participate in the next IRRI Board meeting

2. Establishment of a Sub-Saharan Africa Rice Consortium (SARC) that will:
 - Consolidate technology development and dissemination
 - Conduct training to develop a critical mass of rice scientists in SSA as a priority
 - Increase the involvement of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), private sector and other international partners in technology development and dissemination
 - Constitute a strong post-harvest technology working group by appointing an Africa-wide expert (IRRI may take leadership)
 - Enhance information sharing and develop an Africa Rice Knowledge Bank

3. Contribute to the development of seed systems in sub-Saharan Africa

4. Establish benchmark databases on rice R&D for monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment

5. Actively seek new financial support for programmatic alignment and the establishment of SARC e.g. through CIDA, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Gatsby Foundation, Common Fund for Commodities, National Science Foundation, African Development Bank and others.