



GFAR

GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
FORUM MONDIAL DE LA RECHERCHE AGRICOLE
FORO GLOBAL DE INVESTIGACION AGROPECUARIA

FINAL VERSION
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DRESDEN DECLARATION

“TOWARDS A GLOBAL SYSTEM FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT”

PREAMBLE

At the dawn of the 21st century, we, the stakeholders of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), wish to remind the international community of the increasing importance and relevance of the three challenges that have guided agricultural research over the past decades:

- increasing food production, food access and quality to keep pace with or exceed the rate of population growth;
- economic development in the rural areas to alleviate the poverty and improve the quality of life that leads to exclusion of an important part of the world population, especially small farmers in marginal areas;
- development of sustainable agricultural production systems that are compatible with sustainable management and conservation of natural resources.

These challenges have to be addressed in a rapidly changing socio-economic context. The following trends provide uncommon opportunities but may also create some threats to agricultural research for development:

- Decrease of public research funding in the agricultural sector and emergence of privatized agricultural research, which imply a major change in the division of labor, necessitate the building of new partnerships and raised the issue of private versus public intellectual property rights.
- Globalization and trade liberalization may improve food security through increased access to food at a global level, yet all people may not benefit equally.
- Scientific advances in areas such as agro-ecology, the use of advanced information and communication technologies (ICT) and modern biotechnology are offering opportunities for improving agricultural production and productivity as well as nutritional value, while ensuring sustainable agriculture. There is, however, a critical need to assess the potential impact of these new technologies on human health and the environment.

To address these challenges, the GFAR stakeholders gathered in Dresden, Germany, from 21 to 23 May 2000, have adopted the following Global Vision for Agricultural Research for Development which builds on the diversity and complementarity of the different GFAR stakeholders.

GLOBAL VISION FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT

Advances in agricultural research and development, including major breakthroughs in the new areas of science, have significantly contributed to meeting the challenge of food and nutrition security, agricultural sustainability, production and productivity. However, the world still faces an increasingly complex challenge of feeding its growing population and of eradicating poverty, while assuring an equitable and sustainable use of its natural resources.

We, the GFAR stakeholders, believe that:

- food security, nutritional quality and safety, poverty alleviation and sustainable natural resources management are not only of concern to developing countries but are critical global issues with major impact on the well-being of the society;
- addressing these issues is a prerequisite for assuring peaceful coexistence, the attainment of human rights and basic human development in the new century;
- tackling these challenges is a matter of urgency, considering the rapid process of environmental deterioration and increasing inequalities, with long-term, pervasive impacts taking place in many parts of the world;
- agriculture, rural development and the management of natural resources are not only economic activities, but strategic dimensions of contemporary societies that have important economic, social and environmental functions. It also includes the access to resources by farmers such as land, water and genetic resources.

We share a vision for the future encompassing: (a) the appreciation of the role knowledge plays in the development of agriculture; (b) the conviction that knowledge generation and utilization is increasingly based on global research systems and networks and on farmers-led experiments and innovations; and (c) the belief that new developments in areas of natural resource management, information and communication technologies (ICT) and modern biotechnology generate new opportunities. These new developments represent an enormous potential but, at the same time, could lead to serious negative effects, widening of technology gaps and social exclusion processes. As a consequence, their socio-economic, human health and environmental impacts have to be monitored, risks and benefits evaluated and then regulated as appropriate.

The GFAR stakeholders envision the development of an agriculture including crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry, which is:

- sustainable, equitable, profitable and competitive, fulfilling its functions in the context of community-centered rural development, fully recognizing the role of women in agriculture;
- diversified and flexible in its structure to cope with heterogeneous and rapidly changing agro-ecological and socio-economic environments with an important role for the farm family;
- responsive to multiple sources of knowledge and innovation, both modern and traditional.

This vision implies a progressive shift of paradigm in Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) towards a holistic “Knowledge Intensive Agriculture” accessible to small and poor farmers.

In implementing this vision, the GFAR stakeholders agree to adhere to the following principles:

- Programmes should clearly be subsidiary and complementary to the on-going work and provide a clearly identifiable added value.
- Agricultural research should be demand-driven and implemented through equal partnerships among GFAR stakeholders.
- Priorities for the research agenda are set with a focus on farmers’ perspectives, taking into account the multi-functionality and regional heterogeneity of farming systems.
- Research design and dissemination should involve the intended users and beneficiaries, particularly farmers.

The GFAR stakeholders commit themselves to establishing the following three building blocks of the Global System for Agricultural Research for Development as first steps to implement the Global Vision:

1. The formulation of a global strategic research agenda, which capitalizes on the comparative advantages and the strengths of the different GFAR stakeholders;
2. The promotion of innovative, participatory, cost-effective and sustainable research partnerships and strategic alliances;
3. The ICT networking among stakeholders and the establishment of specialized agricultural knowledge and information systems.

We are convinced that these concerted actions can contribute to the emergence of a global system for agricultural research for development. We are also convinced that this will not succeed without additional investments in agricultural research, which implies additional efforts from the international community and the establishment of new funding mechanisms to mobilize both the public and private sectors. Therefore, the GFAR stakeholders request the policy and decision-makers to strongly support the on-going renewal of agricultural research for development.