

**GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH****FORUM MONDIAL DE LA RECHERCHE AGRICOLE****FORO GLOBAL DE INVESTIGACION AGROPECUARIA****GFAR Secretariat News**EditorialHighlighting 2001

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In this Issue

The GFAR Newsletter is taking on a new form. From last year's paper-based newsletter, we are now delivering the GFAR Newsletter right to your mailbox!

The shift from print to electronic version is our way of reporting updates on the various activities being facilitated by the GFAR Secretariat in a faster and cost-effective manner.

The newsletter is structured into three sections: News from the GFAR Secretariat, from the Regional Fora and from the Stakeholders. You can find every article in the first page and clicking on the lead statement of an article will give you access to the full piece.

In this issue, we are presenting the highlights of 2001. The initial results of the regional priority setting exercises being conducted are reported and this process is creating increased stakeholder involvement in developing and launching Global Partnership Programmes. The main conclusions and recommendations of the GFAR/IFAD Technical Workshop on Developing Global Partnership Programs (GPPs) are summarised as well as the main decisions taken by the GFAR Steering Committee in its October 2001 meeting. We also provide some updates on GFAR's ICT activities, and on upcoming activities in the thematic areas in which GFAR is working. And by the way, did we mention the changes in the GFAR Secretariat?

This issue also provides a glimpse of the changes taking place in the regions: a budding sub-regional fora in Southeast Asia, a new regional fora chair in the Eastern and Central Africa; post-harvest initiatives in Central Asia and the Caucasus as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean; and priority setting exercises in West Asia and North African region. Of course, information is also provided on regional goings-on in Europe and in North America.

The Stakeholders' Section presents an article on strengthening NGOs and Farmers Organizations as well updates on the so-called GFAR Multi-Donor Agreement (MDA).

All this and more can be found in this issue! The GFAR Newsletter can, of course, be further improved with more feedback from you: remember this Newsletter is yours as well! As such, we not only welcome your comments but your articles, too! After all, we are just one click away.

O.O.

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The Show Must Go On: SDR's Farewell Speech to Fernando Chaparro

The Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) was formally established in 1996 by an agreement among stakeholders of agricultural research as an initiative to promote cost-effective partnerships and strategic alliances in this area of research, and to provide a forum for the discussion of strategic issues of interest to them.

At its establishment, GFAR had two secretariats: the **GFAR Secretariat**, based at the World Bank, whose main function was the development of an electronic Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Development (EGFAR); and the **NARS Secretariat**, whose main mandate was to assist NARS in articulating their views and contributions to the global agricultural research agenda.

The hosting of the NARS Secretariat by FAO was formalized in a Letter of Agreement signed on the 17 July, 1998, by FAO and GFAR. It provided that the NARS Secretariat would be a distinct organizational unit within SDR. FAO would provide office space, equipment and supplies, and relevant inputs through the ongoing RP activities of SDR.

Following the first general GFAR Conference in Dresden, Germany, in May 2000, the decision was taken by GFAR to merge the two secretariats. FAO responded positively to the request that the unified secretariat, the **GFAR Secretariat**, be based at FAO.

Fernando Chaparro was the Executive Secretary of the NARS Secretariat and later of the merged GFAR. His activities within FAO expanded beyond the hosting Division to include other technical units.

His enthusiasm, energy and multiple activities have been valued by all. While we can certainly recognize his significant

contributions at FAO, the main beneficiaries of Fernando's work at the GFAR are not present here with us today! I speak of the national stakeholders and regional organizations with whom he worked very closely since 1998. A close look at the increased and meaningful participation of NARS in influencing the international research agenda for agriculture and sustainable development is a good indication of his successes at GFAR.

We congratulate Colombia for gaining back a son that can and will make a difference in the agricultural arena.

On behalf of SDR, we wish Adriana and Fernando all the best in the new assignment!!

Ester Zurberti on behalf of Dietrich Leihner, Director, FAO-SDR

Highlighting 2001



GFAR Contribution to the Regional Priority Setting (RPS) Exercise

Since October 2000, regional and sub-regional fora have been conducting priority-setting exercises and formulating strategies for agricultural research and development. This process has led to the emergence of regional networks and new forms of regional/sub-regional cooperation. GFAR has supported these activities and ensured the participation of non-traditional stakeholders in them, such as NGOs, Farmer Organizations and the Private Sector. The CGIAR is incorporating the updated and refined agendas into its own global agenda, in order to best respond to the needs of developing countries.

The importance of involving all categories of stakeholders in regional priority setting is that it ensures a participatory approach and integrates every stakeholders' contributions and concerns into a region's agenda. This is particularly important in the case of civil society as they are the users and clients of research and development. The participation of civil society reflects the role that

NGOs, the Private Sector and Farmers' Organizations are playing in the increasingly diversified institutional infrastructure of agricultural research, which has traditionally consisted of NARS, IARCs and ARIs.

The European research community and the European Forum on Agricultural Research (EFARD) have also contribute to develop the Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) dimension of the European Research Area (ERA-ARD) as a component of the 6th Framework Programme. EFARD has used the preliminary results generated from the regional RPS exercises, which were collected and consolidated by the GFAR Secretariat. This information was compared to the research interests and priorities that are being identified by the European National Fora and the subsequent analysis resulted in the proposal that EFARD will submit to the European Commission for consideration at the Ministerial Meeting. This process has stimulated the interest of many stakeholders and discussions are underway on possible collaborative arrangements at the inter-regional level.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS of the REGIONAL PRIORITY SETTING EXERCISE

The regional priority setting exercise is an iterative process which identifies regional research priorities and is based on an inter-stakeholder dialogue. The various consultative meetings that have taken place have identified the following general priorities for each Regional/Sub-regional Fora: (a) genetic resource management and biosafety/biosecurity (agrobiodiversity conservation and management, genetic resources policies and IPR, and other activities that support the implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture); (b) biotechnology application in crop and animal production and improvement; (c) natural resource management and agro-ecology (e.g., water management technologies,

soil fertility and land management and participatory farmer-led research methodologies); (d) fisheries and aquatic research (e.g. identification of sustainable techniques and sustainable management strategies for water resources, etc); (e) post-harvest processing, commercialization and marketing (e.g. post-harvest technologies and commercialization of produce for export market, marketing and risk sharing); (f) human resource development, capacity building and policy advocacy (e.g. research-extension-farmer linkages, strengthening of regional networks); and (g) information and communication technology (ICT).

Regional Priorities and Emerging Global Programmes: A Preliminary Report on a Stakeholder Dialogue GFAR Secretariat, September 2001

Another contribution of these exercises is the valuable learning process that is taking place. Four important issues are being addressed and acknowledged: (a) the distinction between *development priorities* and *objectives and research priorities*, which are now being expressed as issues that are researchable; (b) the importance of a focused analysis of research priorities and a better understanding of the value added by using the various *analytical units* that are available for their determination, such as ecosystems, NRM constraints, technological constraints, biodiversity management issues, socio-economic concerns, commodity-chains, the role of new areas of science, etc.; (c) the integration of diverse stakeholders into the research process and the importance of developing an inter-stakeholder dialogue on research priorities; and (d) the value of ensuring a link between regional priority-setting, major development efforts and investment processes as it can greatly contribute to placing agricultural research in national and regional agendas.

O.O.

Highlighting 2001



IFAD-GFAR Workshop on Methodologies, Organization and Management of Global Partnership Programmes

This workshop was an important stepping stone in the ongoing dialogue among a growing number of stakeholders on how to build stronger partnerships in agricultural research and development. Its main success lay in the discussions where the participants raised critical questions and offered solutions to the challenges that were identified.

Building on the "Strengthening Partnerships" theme of the GFAR 2000 Conference, GFAR and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) sponsored a Technical Workshop on Methodologies, Organization and Management of Global Partnership Programmes (GPPs) on the 9-10 of October, 2001 in Rome, Italy.

The objective of the Rome Workshop was to take stock of the progress made towards building GPPs since 2000. Several case studies were discussed in terms of how to build stronger agricultural research and development partnerships in order to facilitate the emergence of GPPs. An early conclusion of the workshop was the *need to involve, as much as possible, more stakeholders in this type of dialogue and to initiate similar discussions at national, sub-regional and regional levels*, aimed at improving the understanding of how to participate in or initiate a GPP.

Lessons Learned

The case studies presented and analyzed highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholder participation and the various means of formulating and managing partnership programmes.

The discussions included many innovative proposals and suggestions for building effective partnerships in ARD and GPPs. The importance of a 'real' involvement by as many stakeholders as

possible was stressed, as it ensures the close link between social and technological innovation that is required for research to achieve development objectives. Participants also suggested that the number, type and roles of partners be dynamic throughout a research partnership programme, and noted that unconventional partners such as local governments, innovative farmers, and the private sector can be key to the success of the programmes. Capacity building and knowledge sharing were identified as vital components for the motivation and empowerment of all stakeholders, as well as the sustainability of partnerships.

Regarding the formulation and management of GPPs, participants stressed that programmes should build on existing activities, and on the felt needs and enthusiasms of those who recognize the potential in partnerships and interaction. As such, the research and development agenda of GPPs must be influenced by community problems as well as by researchers' suggestions. GPPs should be stakeholder-led initiatives and address the social, institutional and political dimensions of the theme they cover, the social utilization of the knowledge they generate. Participants highlighted the importance of fairly shared governance and responsibility between partners who formulate and manage a partnership program. They also recognized the need for a champion or leader who would play a catalytic role in a GPP, particularly in the early stages of its development. This catalytic role however, must be shaped such that all stakeholders have ownership of the GPP.

Research Partnership Programmes and the Role of the GFAR

During the workshop, participants agreed that all agricultural research, including that carried out by the International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs), should be development-oriented, and that regional priority-setting should feed into international agricultural research agendas. GFAR is ensuring that the process is multi-stakeholder and is facilitating and supporting GPP initiatives.

Global Partnership Programmes are built on decentralized

initiatives and as such facilitate interregional linkages, cross-fertilization of experiences and a rapid spread of research results, as well as avoiding unnecessary duplications and overlaps in research agendas. They offer the possibility to explore new means of communication and dialogue between stakeholders. They also encourage scientists and other actors in research and development to consider new and unconventional ways of working together that go beyond existing institutional mandates.

The primary role of the GFAR in GPPs is to facilitate the creation of fora involving multiple stakeholders at different levels as well as the creation of effective local, sub-regional, regional and global partnerships. GFAR is therefore an added-value "service" encouraging and testing innovative approaches, methodologies and spaces to build research partnerships. In this context the GPPs, which are developed from the bottom-up and with emphasis on stakeholder involvement, could also significantly contribute to achieving some of the development aims of the Challenge Programs. The participants suggested that, particularly with the increasing involvement of all stakeholders including the CGIAR, GFAR take full advantage of the synergies that are developing among its stakeholders.

Funding GPPs

The participants of the Rome Workshop reviewed the possible funding mechanisms for GPPs and some strategies to initiate them. The following points were highlighted:

- The funding strategy for GPPs should build on the specific strength of *stakeholder-led initiatives* and on the added-value that they bring to international agricultural research. That is, the main characteristic that makes GPPs attractive for donors must be emphasized: GPPs are built on stakeholder demands and on stakeholder-driven processes. As such they can facilitate the adoption of social innovations that complement technological innovations and effectively increase their development impact. The

mobilization of stakeholders and their commitment to a "shared research and development agenda" leads to a *higher efficiency of research and development investments*, since it generates more impact per dollar invested.

- Most programmes involving global activities depend on a dynamic mosaic of funding from different sources and a large component of cost sharing between partners. It should be understood however, that not all partners who should be involved can mobilize the same level of resources.
- Besides cost-sharing, other potential sources of funding are Regional Development Banks, the private sector, bilateral funding through embassies (although this could involve high transaction costs for regional or global programmes), competitive grant schemes (although some concerns were expressed that these may not be suitable for applied agricultural research) and national and international donors interested in supporting development-oriented and stakeholder-led research partnerships.
- Many donors do not have the flexibility to fund regional cooperative programmes and should start looking at ways to support sub-regional, regional and global partnerships.

Follow up Actions

Three follow-up actions to the Rome Workshop were discussed during the meetings and were further articulated by the Technical Advisory Group. The follow-up actions are to: (a) continue and deepen the learning process of how to build stakeholder-led GPPs; (b) further develop and launch the GPPs that were discussed at the workshop; and (c) strengthen the collaboration between the GPPs and other global initiatives, such as the Challenge Programmes of the CGIAR. These three points coincide with the three expected outputs of the workshop, which were thus fully achieved.

The full proceedings of the workshop, including the texts of all case studies, presentations as well as the summaries of the discussions can be accessed at the GFAR Website (www.egfar.org).

A minidisk including the final report and key studies is also available on request (GFAR-Secretariat@fao.org).

O.O.

Highlighting 2001

Main Decisions of the GFAR Meetings held in October 2001, in Washington D.C.

The GFAR-SC Meetings that took place in Washington D.C. in October 2001, covered a number of important items. The GFAR and NARS Steering Committees looked into: the status of the GFAR Business Plan and Programme of Work 2001-2003, with a focus on the regional priority setting process and the development of Global Partnership Programmes (GPPs); strengthening the stakeholder constituencies of Agricultural Research for Development; the work of the GFAR Secretariat in facilitating the participation of stakeholders in the emerging Challenge Programmes (CPs); and preparations for the GFAR 2003 Conference.

The following paragraphs summarize the main issues that emerged from the discussions:

1. After each region presented their respective regional priority setting (RPS) exercise, it was agreed that action should be taken to ensure that regional priorities are taken into consideration in both the emerging GPPs that GFAR is facilitating and the CPs that the CGIAR is developing. The RPS activities will continue to be pursued following an iterative process.
2. After presenting the results of and activities resulting from the GFAR/IFAD Workshop on GPPs it was decided that a concise and clear statement of the complementarities and differences between GPPs and CPs be issued. A two-page paper was produced (with the help of an inter-stakeholder

working group established for this purpose) and presented in both the GFAR and the CGIAR meetings.

3. GPPs and CPs, as two modes of collaboration in ARD, play a different but highly complementary role in the global scientific community of ARD; they are part of the same global system and pursue the same development objectives. As such, their complementarities will provide a synergism and their differences will broaden opportunities for stakeholders.
4. The GFAR 2003 General Conference will take place at the same time as the FARA meeting in Senegal. The proposed general theme of the conference is "*Linking Research, Rural Innovation and Development: From Regional Priorities to Global Action.*" Preparations for the conference are underway; a Task Force is being established (constituted by one representative from each stakeholder constituency) that will co-ordinate the organization of the conference.
5. Two particular aspects of the *GFAR Business Plan and Programme of Work /2001-2003*, were discussed: (a) Advocacy for ARD in order to place agriculture and agricultural research back into the national, regional and global agendas; and (b) identification and discussion of key strategic policy topics of agricultural research, aimed at strengthening the capacity of all stakeholders of ARD to cope with the changing environment of agricultural research.
6. The question of how to strengthen stakeholder constituencies and increase their participation in ARD at the national, regional and global levels was raised. The discussion focused on the participation of farmers' organizations, NGOs and the private sector in particular. Also discussed was how to improve the "*representation function*" in heterogeneous constituencies of stakeholders, especially considering the key and increasingly important roles that farmers' organizations NGOs and the private sector are playing. The

GFAR Secretariat was requested to work closely with the respective stakeholder representatives in the GFAR Steering Committee in order to see how to further advance this process and strengthen stakeholder participation. The importance of stakeholder participation was also raised in the CGIAR meetings in the context of how to include these three stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of CPs.

7. The CGIAR AGM-2001 meetings approved 12 recommendations (with some modifications), which were presented in the CGIAR Interim Executive Committee Integrated Report. Three important decisions were made that have a direct impact on GFAR activities: (a) the selection of GFAR to be a permanent member of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the CGIAR; (b) increasing stakeholder participation, particularly in terms of looking at options to strengthen the participation of farmers' organizations in ARD and in the discussion of the emerging CPs; and (c) collaboration of the GFAR Secretariat in facilitating the participation of stakeholders in the emerging CPs.

7th MTM

7th Management Team Meeting in Rome, 24-25 January 2002: Three Critical Issues

GFAR Budget

The GFAR budget is being programmed on a three-year cycle. The shortage of immediately available funding for 2002 however, requires that GFAR pay particular attention this year's budget and expenses. Dr. Paroda, the GFAR Chairman, highlighted the necessity to decrease costs such as those related to travel.

Selection of the NARS Senior Fellow

Samuel Bruce Oliver has been selected to be the GFAR NARS Senior Fellow following a screening process by the GFAR Management Team. GFAR Secretariat has received an official statement confirming his secondment to the GFAR Secretariat. He is expected to join us in Rome in June 2002.

New Plan of Work of the GFAR Secretariat for the interim period

Jean-François Giovannetti has been designated as officer in charge for the interim phase. He will be supported by an Interim Executive Committee composed of Dietrich Liehner, Rodney Cooke and Henri Rouilled'Orfeuil.

A collective process will be launched within the GFAR staff and the IEC in order to define a new plan of work for the next coming months, until the arrival of the new Executive Secretary.

JF.G.

Relaunching
e-GFAR



O.O.

Where We Are

A mock-up of the new GFAR Website is finished and exists as a static set of HTML pages. EGFAR is still under construction and some further steps include building databases in order to develop a back-office mechanism. The "experimental issue" will be accessible soon. Comments and suggestions on the site are welcomed so that they may be incorporated into the final version.

Fulvia Bonaiuti is GFAR's Web Publisher and is taking charge of building the new site. Miss Bonaiuti works for GFAR through the Italian APO Programme and was previously working within IAO, in Florence, Italy.

JF.G.

Strengthening the RAIS Through EU Funding

In November of last year, the GFAR Secretariat designed and submitted a proposal in response to a call for projects for the Accompanying Measures of the European INCODEV Programme: **GLOBAL-RAIS**. Global-RAIS hopes to launch regional workshops in the five following regions: WANA, CAC, LAC, SSA and Asia and Pacific to discuss each regions' agricultural information system. An inter-regional workshop will follow these regional consultations so as to define a strategic agenda at both the global and regional levels, and to promote economies of scale and synergism between the involved stakeholders.

This project has received a preliminary positive response from the DG Research, with a pledge of € 80,000.

As soon as the notification is available, the GFAR Secretariat will approach each RAIS Manager to co-build a provisional agenda for this project. Co-operation will be sought with WAICENT outreach and with advanced RAISs such as Infosys in Europe and Infotec in LAC.

JF.G.

Facilitating Units

Workshop Montpellier 6-7 June 2002. Global Programmes for Commodity Chains. Results and Prospects

Background

The Global Forum identified commodity chains, both major crops and under-utilized species, as one of its priorities to facilitate research cooperation and promote partnerships. The proposed approach is based on the concept of a Global Programme.

Building its approach on lessons learnt from PROMUSA, a global programme developed by INIBAP, the GFAR Steering Committee mandated IPGRI to study the feasibility of establishing global

programmes for commodity chains, and CIRAD offered to cooperate on the topic of major commodity crops (citrus, cocoa, coconut, coffee, cotton, oil palm, pineapple, rubber and sugarcane). In September 1999, they jointly established a small facilitation unit, with an expert in commodity chains seconded by CIRAD and based at INIBAP headquarters, in Montpellier, France. The Facilitation Unit reported regularly to the Steering Committee and will present a synthetic report of its work during the Committee meeting due to take place in May 2002.

A scientist has recently been appointed by Germany to coordinate and facilitate activities on Under-utilized and Orphan Crops at the global level. She will work from the IPGRI headquarters in Rome.

Objectives

After two and a half years of activities, the workshop aims at reviewing and discussing the work done by the Facilitation Unit in order to set up the ways to further the initiative. Based on a synthesis report prepared by the Facilitation Unit, and following the comments made by the Steering Committee in May 2001, its objectives are will be as follows:

1. To discuss the results of the Facilitation Unit, including the achievements, the problems faced and the lessons learnt from the activities relating to information on commodity chains - gathering and dissemination-, contacts with the stakeholders and assistance with the establishment of global programmes;
2. To discuss the way to move forward, especially on the institutional aspects, partnerships and funding mechanisms. This point will include commodity crops as well as UOCs;
3. To discuss and agree on the next steps to further the initiative.

Expected Outputs

The expected outputs are:

- Comments of the Stakeholders on the work done by the

facilitation unit, the problems faced and the lessons learnt,

- Agreement from the various stakeholders on the way to move forward this initiative,
- Proposals for the next steps.

JF.G.

*Asia-Pacific
Region*



APAARI Expert Consultation on ARD Priority Setting. Bangkok, Thailand, 12-14 November 2001

The APAARI Expert Consultation on ARD Priority Setting that took place in Bangkok last 12-14 November 2001 was an integration of the results of the three sub-regional priority setting workshops that took place in South and West Asia, East and Southeast Asia, and in the Pacific Region between June and October 2001.

The comparative analysis among the sub-regions identified seven common areas for research which were then established as the regional priorities. The priority areas are: (1) Integrated natural resource management (including policy development and institutional issues related to NRM); (2) Genetic enhancement and agrobiodiversity conservation (including livestock and fisheries selection and improvement, microbial functional agrobiodiversity, bio-safety issues/policy/GMOs/IPRs); (3) Commodity chain development (Linking Farmers to Markets); (4) Meeting the Protein Demand of a Growing Population; (5) Tree and forest management for landholders (e.g., forest management, agro-forestry in production systems); (6) Information management for agricultural development (including access and use); and (7) Capacity building (i.e., human resources, institutional, and research policy development).

Workshop participants provided inputs to the CGIAR process of

selecting Challenge Programmes (CPs) by identifying how the ten CP proposals relate to the seven APAARI priorities. This analysis showed that seven of the ten CP proposals are closely related to the seven APAARI priorities, namely: the CPs on Water and Agriculture, Desertification, Climate Change, Mountain Agriculture, Biofortification, Global Genetic Resources and Genomics and Animal Health and Production. In some cases the CP proposal is related to more than one regional priority.

APAARI has transmitted this congruence of regional concerns with the CP proposals to the CGIAR; they have expressed the desire to have the region's priorities considered in the decision of which CPs will move on to project preparation, and for the region to be actively involved in both the design and implementation of the CPs under consideration.

Some of the next steps identified in the workshop include conducting gap analysis; assessment of the capacity of regional networks and collaborations in ARD to address the gaps; development of new proposals for regional and/or global collaboration; identification of funding strategies for each proposal; and preparation of guidelines for the development of proposals.

O.O.

Asia-Pacific
Region



APARIS

During the 6th Executive Committee Meeting of APAARI held the 12th to the 14th of November 2002, the status of the development of the Asia/Pacific Agricultural Research Information System (APARIS) was revisited.

The APAARI Website (<http://www.apaari.org>) has been re-designed in order to prepare it for its new role of being the electronic platform of the APARIS Regional Information System. It is now being conceived as an

electronic communication platform with two major objectives: (a) to facilitate communication among APAARI members, and (b) to serve as the main platform for APARIS. This Website provides access to Regional Research Networks (RRNs) that operate in the Asia/Pacific region. The database currently contains information on 19 regional networks, and it will continue to develop in the near future in order to cover all networks that effectively operate in the region, at both the regional and the sub-regional levels.

The Website will be further developed to contain: (1) Information Tools for the monitoring of ARD activities in the region; (2) ARD project databases; and (3) NARS databases that will provide information on the institutions that make up each NARS of the Asia/Pacific region. This institutional database is being developed with the support of FAO/SDRR. Once established, it will be the responsibility of each NINP to maintain the information in the database.

An important information requirement that was identified was the need to facilitate access to scientific publications generated by agricultural research in the region. APARIS will therefore link with the regional network of AGRIS National Focal Points that the FAO has been supporting. The GFAR Secretariat will also facilitate the exchange of experiences with other regions where initiatives are being developed to facilitate access to bibliographic information on agriculture, such as in Latin America where a *Regional Network of Agricultural Libraries* has been established. Discussions are also underway at APAARI regarding the possibility of web publishing to facilitate on-line access to whole documents as well as bibliographic searches. This topic will be covered in the *Inter-RAIS Workshop* that the GFAR Secretariat is organizing for 2002.

O.O.

Asia-Pacific
Region



SEAFAR Southeast Asian Forum for Agricultural Research: Prospects and Opportunities

The SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), in collaboration with the Philippine Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) and Thailand Department of Agriculture (DOA), organized a meeting for the establishment of the Southeast Asian Forum on Agricultural Research (SEAFAR), held last 14-16 February 2002, in Bangkok, Thailand.

The objectives of the SEAFAR meeting were:

1. to get acquainted with various activities of National Agriculture Research Centers (NARCs) of the member countries of the ASEAN;
2. to discuss the establishment of SEAFAR within the existing framework of ASEAN cooperation; and
3. to draft a Statement of Endorsement for submission to the Senior Officials Meeting - ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Fisheries (SOM-AMAF).

Key officials of agricultural research institutions from the 10 ASEAN member countries: *Brunei, Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam*, as well as a representative from the ASEAN Secretariat and the Executive Director of the ASEAN Foundation participated in the meeting. Each country representative gave a presentation on the status and experience in agricultural research of their country.

During the workshop, the participants learned that agriculture in the Southeast Asian sub-region faced similar problems and shared a common purpose: food security and poverty alleviation; food safety and quality; and sustainable development. The workshop served as a venue for these ten Southeast Asian countries to

express the need for intergovernmental collaboration, technical assistance, and knowledge sharing in agricultural research for development.

Though these ten countries have different levels of development in agricultural research and knowledge management, SEAMEO SEARCA envisioned to serve as SEAFAR Secretariat, will continue to play a catalytic role in ensuring the momentum of this initiative.

As a result of the workshop, SEAFAR delegates came up with two resolutions:

Resolution 1 - The Establishment of a Working Group on Research for Development under AMAF;

Resolution 2 - Statement of Common Interest Toward the Establishment of SEAFAR.

These two resolutions serve as official endorsement of the Working Group and for consideration by the SOM-AMAF, respectively.

Dr. Alexander Flor
Dina Magnaye
(SEARCA)

Central Asia & Caucasus Region

GFAR and FAO/AGSI Launch the First Phase of "GIPhT"

With the active participation of the five Regional Fora, GFAR and FAO/AGSI launched the first phase of the *Global Initiative on Post Harvest Technology*. Four of the five regional consultations have taken place between September 2001 and February 2002, in Uganda, the Philippines, Egypt and Kazakhstan. The fifth consultation will be held in Ecuador in March 2002. Representatives of the GFAR Secretariat, FAO/AGSI and stakeholders in agricultural research and agro-industrial development attended the workshops.

The results of the five regional consultations will be used to formulate a regional strategy and a plan of action for the second phase of GIPhT.

For information on GIPhT please contact:

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F.A.

Central Asia & Caucasus Region

Our Chair, Dr. Raj Paroda Honored

Dr. R.S. Paroda, CGIAR-PFU and Regional Coordinator, ICARDA-CAC, has received the prestigious Honorary Membership of the American Society of Agronomy and also the Crop Science Society of America on 23-24 October 2001.

(from CAC News)

Latin America & Caribbean Region



"FORAGRO: Integrating the Small Farmer into Agroindustrial Development"

The last of five Regional Consultation meetings on postharvest technologies (Global Initiative on Post Harvest Technology, GIPhT) is taking place this month in Quito, Ecuador, as part of an inter-regional analysis of agroindustrial development cases based on small farmers that has been supported by GFAR and FAO/AGSI, in close collaboration with each Regional Forum. In this regional workshop an analysis is being made of the factors that have led to successful cases of agroindustrial development of basic food products that play an important role in peasant economies, based on the articulation of "innovation networks" that have brought together farmers, researchers, extension agents, providers of inputs and NGOs.

The importance of this approach for developing countries is that it seeks to learn from recent research and development efforts related to the control of post-harvest losses, the conservation and handling of food crops after

their harvest, and successful cases of increasing local value-added, as well as rural employment and income generation, through the development of small and medium-sized enterprises that process crops that are important in peasant economies. The results of this analysis will be useful for other stakeholder-led initiatives that are being carried out in the context of GFAR, such as the Global Partnership Programme that is being initiated in the area of orphan crops. Related to this GPP and in the context of the GIPhT regional consultations, it is important to highlight FAO/AGSI attention toward potential inter-regional market niches supporting the Orphan commodities, the Organic products and the Ornamentals. These regional cross-cutting issues are considered key-topics for research and development activities to be supported by FAO/AGSI, in particular to preserve in each region the high agricultural biodiversity, innovate and improve the quality of the products (certifications, control of quality), improve the technology, innovate and orient the results of the improved technology toward the socioeconomic benefit.

Through this collaboration, GFAR has made available to FAO its knowledge and capacity of contacts among the various stakeholders offering to FAO an important added value to the consultations, allowing to obtain an articulated picture of the Post Harvest sector in each region, a precise and homogeneous regional diagnosis to formulation the FAO intervention in the Post harvest sector at global level.

The report on the FORAGRO workshop will soon be available, along with the reports of the other four regional consultations that have taken place. The lessons learned from the inter-regional analysis that will now be carried out will be available by early summer. The FORAGRO and the other regional reports may be consulted in the EGFar website (www.egfar.org).

Fernando Chaparro
F.A.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: Changes in the African Landscape.

ASARECA is pleased to welcome their new Executive Secretary, Seyfu Ketema, who joined their team in September 2001. Dr. Ketema was Director General of EARO, the Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organization. The outgoing Executive Secretary, Prof. G.C.Mrema, joined the Agricultural Support System Division of FAO. For further information please visit AGRIFORUM Web Page (<http://www.asareca.org/agriforum>)

During the last Plenary Session of CORAF/WECARD, Samuel Bruce Oliver was nominated vice-chair of the Executive Committee. He will also be joining the GFAR Secretariat, hosted by FAO/SDR, in June of this year as Senior Visiting Scientist. For further information please visit CORAF Website (<http://www.coraf.org/secretariat/docmts/>).

Coming meetings: FARA is holding its Plenary Session between March 17-22, 2002 during the African Agricultural Research Week in Maputo, Mozambique and CORAF/WECARD will hold its Plenary Session in July, in Côte d'Ivoire. The second GFAR Conference is expected to take place in Dakar, Sénégal in 2003. Preliminary contacts at the highest level have begun with regards to the planning of the conference.

JF.G.



Highlights of the AARINENA Executive Committee Meeting

The AARINENA Executive Committee meeting took place last 19-20 December 2001 in Tehran, Iran.

The meeting tackled the agricultural research priority setting process in the CWANA Region. Highlighting its bottom-up approach, this exercise involves re-visiting sub-regional and regional research priorities considering taking into account developments at various levels (from national to global). It also involves identifying the CGIAR niche within the identified regional priorities from which CGIAR strategy, action plan and activities will be formulated and implemented. Implementing activities in the region will require bringing together CGIAR offices operating in the region, AARINENA and the CAC NARS Forum. As such, operational modalities to facilitate such "integration process" is also being identified.

Currently, an inventory of CGIAR activities in CWANA region is being undertaken and ICARDA is facilitating a region-wide survey on research priority setting and regional cooperation. Sub-regional brainstorming meetings on the topic are being held in each of the five CWANA sub-regions. The findings and recommendations arising from these activities will be discussed on 8-9 May 2002 in Aleppo, Syria.

Other items discussed in the meeting include (a) the outcome of GFAR meetings held in Washington D.C. in October 2001 (focusing on the comparison between GPPs and CPs as well as on the next GFAR Conference); (b) cooperation with EFARD; (c) Cairo Regional Workshop on Post-harvest; (d) RAIS Secretariat (to be hosted by Iran); (e) Date Palm and Olive Networks; (f) Seat of AARINENA Secretariat (Jordan); and (g) date of the next AARINENA General Assembly (May, 26-28 2002, Jordan).

O.O.
F.B.



Welcome to Taraneh Ebrahimi, AARINENA- RAIS Manager

GFAR wishes to welcome Taraneh Ebrahimi, the new Senior Officer of the AARINENA Secretariat, from Teheran, Iran.

Miss Ebrahimi is the Web designer and web publisher for the Agricultural Research Education and Extension Organization (AREEO) as well as the Librarian of the Agricultural Scientific Information & Documentation Center (ASIDC).

Her qualifications include an M.A. from the Department of Ancient Middle East Culture and Languages of Azad University in Tehran, and a B.A. from the Department of Foreign Languages, (Italian Language) of the University of Tehran.

She brings with her eight years of experience in administration, research and training.

Welcome on board, Taraneh!

F.B.



2nd European Forum on ARD Conference

The 2nd European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD) meeting, which will take place in Rome on 17 May 2002, has the primary goal of setting up a European ARD system around the four main themes identified in the 1st EFARD meeting in Wageningen (Genetic Resources and Biotechnology; Natural Resources and Agroecology; Commodity Chains and Food Safety; and Innovation, Rural Transformation and Poverty) and through these contribute to the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) and the global agricultural research for development system.

To translate the objectives into operational proposals, the four main themes will be analyzed in light of the possibility of developing an active European scientific community, inclusive of scientists working in other regions, around a few specific action programmes, designed to reflect specific social challenges more than pure scientific concerns.

The meeting will bring together about 250 representatives of the European stakeholders in ARD, as well as policy makers, representatives of international organizations (CGIAR, FAO, IFAD, CTA, ...) and of GFAR and Regional/Sub-regional Fora.

Fabien Boulter
(EFARD)

Europe



Meeting of the EIARD-Infosys Core Group and Associated Partners

The EIARD-Infosys Core Group and Associated Partners meeting was held in Bonn last February 18-19, 2002. During the first day, progress reports of the Coordination Unit, the national nodes and the working groups were presented. A particularly interesting item was the very positive report on the outcomes of the first external review of the Infosys information system. The following day, four Working Groups worked to design and develop "INFOSYS+", a project that may be submitted to the EU for funding.

The critical issues that were discussed with regards to INFOSYS+ were:

- strengthening co-operation with other EU networks (Euforic, ETRFN, ECPDM, EADI, etc.),
- development of an outreach component with the other RAIS, in close relationship with EGFAR,
- providing support for the main goals of EIARD, in the field of Information and Communication Management,

- stronger involvement of INFOSYS+ as a comprehensive knowledge management system.

For further information please contact the Infosys Manager, Hubertus Franzen (franzen@zadi.de).

JF.G.

North America

North America Launches the North American Forum on Agricultural Development, a GFAR-North America Collaboration

GFAR is pleased to announce the launch of the North American Forum on Agricultural Research (NAFAR). Visit NAFAR Website (<http://www.nafar.info>) to find links to Canadian & American institutions and organizations that are active in Agricultural Research for Development (ARD). Information can also be found on institutions and organizations working with particular themes such as biotechnology, natural resource management and particular commodities. The objective of this site is to facilitate contact between ARD stakeholders both within North America and between the North and South, and to encourage a North American dialogue on different viewpoints, interests, and perspectives in ARD. This collaboration will improve the effectiveness of North American investment in international agricultural research and make information on North American strengths and expertise easily accessible, especially to partners in the South and Emerging Democracies.

S.M.

The Non Governmental Organizations



Bringing NGOs into the Global ARD Community

The GFAR External Review recommended that both these stakeholder constituencies continue to receive special

assistance so as to strengthen their representation in GFAR.

To facilitate strengthening the NGO constituency, NGOs named NGO Regional Focal Points in each region (except North America). These focal points are responsible for keeping NGOs and FOs in their regions informed about GFAR activities and to encourage them to further influence research agendas at the national and regional levels.

GFAR had been working with NGOs to fostering global and regional research partnerships in the area of natural resource management and agroecology (NRM/AE) and in regional priority-setting (RPS). These activities have led to interesting pilot initiatives that NGOs and FOs are pursuing, such as the PROLINNOVA (Promotion of Local Innovation) Initiative and follow-up activities to the *Guacimo Meeting* of small farmers held in August 2001. NGOs have also been engaged in discussions on implementing GFAR-facilitated Global Partnership Programmes (GPPs), which are multi-stakeholder collaborative initiatives initiated around themes identified through the RPS process. GFAR is facilitating the strengthening of NGOs participation in Global ARD by emphasizing the need for stakeholders to not only have representation in decision-making bodies at the global level but also to *effectively "represent a constituency."*

Another important step in increasing the participation of Civil Society Organizations in ARD is the recent decision by the EFARD Steering Committee at their February meeting in Rome, to open up a seat on the EFARD SC for each stakeholder group that is not already represented by the national representatives. Three seats have therefore been made available to Farmers' Organizations, NGOs and the Private Sector. The Working Group within the EFARD SC will decide upon the most effective means that each stakeholder group can be truly representative of their constituency, and the funding strategies that will ensure their participation.

For more information please see GFAR's policy paper on Farmers' Organizations and NGOs,

["Strengthening the Participation of Farmers' Organizations and of NGOs in Global ARD"](#)

O.O.

Bringing Farmers into the Global ARD Community



The Farmers' Organizations

The First GFAR External Review points out that: "A key responsibility of the GFAR Secretariat is to assist stakeholders to further develop their constituencies. This is especially true for farmers' organizations, in view of their relative lack of a strong voice in agricultural research decision-making, and the need to redress this to make research much more demand-led, and also for NGOs in view of their large numbers and varied scope and goals." The GFAR External Review recommended that both these stakeholder constituencies continue to receive special assistance so as to strengthen their representation in GFAR.

Genius lies in pointing out the obvious and no where is this more true than with the statement that farmers are as fundamental to agriculture as water is to plants. As the end users of research and technology and producers of the world's food supply, farmers are the pulse of agricultural research and the back bone of agricultural production. Farmers' Organizations (FOs) are thus key stakeholders in Agricultural Research for Development and must have the capacity to function with agility in the new global ARD community. This is particularly true as governments around the world decrease public investment in the agricultural sector and, in some cases, farmers are forced to shoulder many of the activities previously conducted and funded by the government. As such, they are playing an increasingly important role in rural development and agricultural research. The growing number of partnerships between FOs and scientists, public and private agricultural institutions and NGOs reflects this trend and reinforces the need to improve the capacity

of FOs to enter *as equals* into partnerships with others who are often institutionally and financially stronger. Strengthening FOs is thus fundamental to develop the agricultural research capacity and the agricultural sector of nations and regions.

GFAR is working closely with FOs to ensure their participation in ARD and has recently released a policy paper entitled "[Strengthening the Participation of Farmers' Organizations and of NGOs in Global ARD](#)". The paper analyzes the various strategies and means through which GFAR is helping out strengthen FOs and NGOs and facilitate their participation in ARD at the regional and the global levels. In particular, GFAR, together with some FOs, is exploring the possibility of establishing a representative body at the global level. This would act as a farmers co-ordinating body at the global level. Such a coalition would ensure that farmers have a collective voice at the global level and thus have greater impact on lobbying, influencing global research and development agendas and mobilizing funding.

Another important step in increasing the participation of Civil Society Organizations in ARD is the recent decision by the EFARD Steering Committee, on February 22 in Rome, to open up a seat on the EFARD SC for each stakeholder group that is not already represented by the national representatives. (See "[Bringing NGOs into the Global ARD Community](#)").

S.M.

The Donors Community



Agreement Between IFAD, the GFAR and the FAO of the UN Concerning the Establishment and Operation of the GFAR Secretariat

The so-called Multi-Donor Agreement (MDA) between IFAD and FAO is now finalized and is expected to be signed in May

2002, during the GFAR SC. A specific appendix to the MDA will be added in order to detail ongoing projects and their related funding. It will mainly focus on the "Fonds de Solidarité Prioritaire" of the French MAE, the PISA project to be launched through the IAO/ICEPS/GFAR consortium with the support of the "Ministeri degli Affari Esteri" of Italy, and the DG/DEV funding to be discussed in the near future with the European Commission.

JF.G.

GFAR Secretariat

| |
|---------------------------|
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