



NEWSLETTER

GLOBAL FORUM ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (GFAR)

c/o FAO, viale delle Terme di Caracalla, Rome 00100, Italy

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Issue 0/2000

EDITORIAL

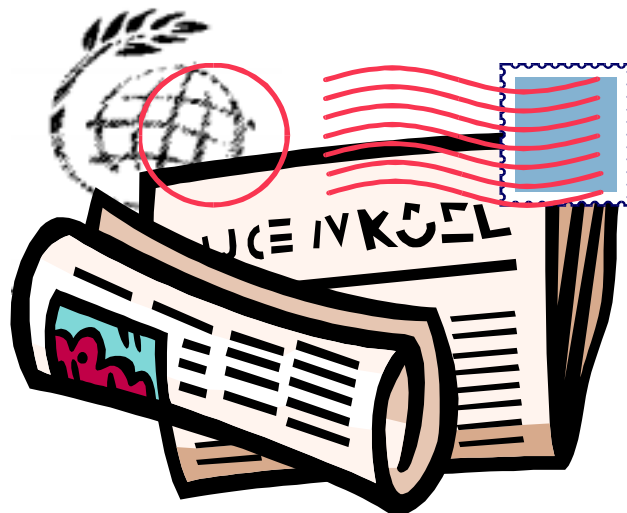
Now Available: GFAR Newsletter Issue No. "0"

With this issue we are initiating the **GFAR Newsletter**, as a communication media to disseminate information on GFAR activities and programmes. The objective of this Newsletter is to disseminate information on GFAR activities, on events and meetings being organized by the various stakeholders, and on important inter-stakeholder initiatives that are being organized or facilitated in the context of the Global Forum.

The prime objective of this Issue "0" is obviously to inform you, through brief notes, of GFAR and GFAR's stakeholders whereabouts since June 2000. Equally important is to test the format and content that this GFAR Newsletter should take to be informative and comprehensive, while remaining brief.

We currently intend to publish such a newsletter on a quarterly basis and to disseminate it not only through *EGFAR* but also through e-mail to those who may have difficulties in internet access. You will note that, at present, the Newsletter is organized under two main headings: GFAR and GFAR Stakeholders. In the next issue, we hope to open at least one new section on specific topics that will receive more substantive coverage.

Please do not hesitate to send any comments or suggestions to: GFAR-Secretariat@fao.org. Lets design and construct this Newsletter together, through your active participation.



External Review endorses GFAR

The validity of the original vision and goals of Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) was confirmed by an External Review commissioned by the GFAR Steering Committee. The External Review Panel also endorsed the GFAR objectives and priorities and concluded its assessment by recommending a continued strong support to GFAR by all its stakeholders.

The Review Panel, composed of Dr. Abbas Kesseba (Chairman), Tim Dottridge and John Russell, was financially supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Canadian International Development Agency-International Development Research Center (CIDA/IDRC). The Panel members worked from May to October 2000 through extensive reading, intensive discussions with the GFAR Secretariat, questionnaires and interviews with many different stakeholders.

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The GFAR Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the entire team of the GFAR Secretariat take this opportunity to wish you heartily a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2001!

Let's continue to pull our efforts to build together a Global Agricultural Knowledge System to improve the livelihood of our poorest populations while preserving our environment.



*GFAR Review... from p. 1*

While suggesting and recommending ways and means to improve the organization, management and operationalization, the Review Panel recognized that GFAR has made con-

siderable progress since its launching and has now grown from a novel concept to a potentially leading instrument that can foster the International Agricultural Research system in the years to come.

The full report "GFAR First External Review" is available in English and the Executive Summary is also available in French and Spanish.

GFAR meets in Washington D.C.

As usual, GFAR organized its meetings immediately prior to and during the Consultative Group on Agricultural Research (CGIAR) International Centers' Week (ICW) last 21-24 October 2000 in Washington D.C., USA.

The 8th GFAR Steering Committee Meeting was held last 21 October; the 8th NARS Steering Committee on 22 October; and the 6th GFAR Donor Support Group met on 24 October.

During the GFAR-SC meeting, the report of the GFAR External Review was presented and its conclusions and recommendations extensively discussed. GFAR Chair Dr. R. S. Paroda mentioned that GFAR is still in its taking off stage and that the report provides good guidelines on the direction to take and on priority activities for the GFAR Secretariat, the facilitating agencies, the GFAR stakeholders, in particular the regional/sub-regional fora, etc. He highlighted the need for more interaction among stakeholders in between GFAR meetings.

Also during the meeting, Dr. Ian Johnson, new CGIAR chair, addressing the GFAR-SC members, emphasized the need for the CGIAR to keep some agility in developing its strategic agenda. For him, the key questions are the trust of the civil society and the ability to think creatively. In this respect, the GFAR can be of great help.

Progress reports by various stakeholders were also presented during the meeting.

The draft versions of the Minutes of these three meetings are under circulation for comments and will be posted on EGFAR as soon as possible.

Unified GFAR Secretariat

In October 2000, the GFAR Steering Committee acknowledged that, as agreed in May 2000, the unified Secretariat has become fully operational hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, Italy. In addition to the departure of Alain Derevier, Arnoud Braun, Associate Professional Officer (Information & Communication) has left the Secretariat at the beginning of October 2000.

Currently, the GFAR Secretariat is composed of Fernando Chaparro, Executive Secretary; Christian Hoste, Senior Officer seconded by CIRAD (France); Oliver Oliveros, Associate Professional Officer (supported by the Netherlands); Catherine Gaury, Senior Secretary; and Maria Cristina Esuperanzi, Secretary.

It is worth noting that the GFAR External Review Panel has recommended to staff the GFAR Secretariat with two additional Senior Officers with different profiles, the top priority being given to a Senior ICT specialist.

DOCUMENTS of the GFAR MEETINGS in Washington

The main documents prepared and distributed during these meetings are the following:

- GFAR-2000 Conference: Highlights and Follow-up Action (E/F/S)
- Some Thoughts on the Follow-up to GFAR-2000 on Research Partnerships (E/F/S)
- The Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) First External Review. Executive Summary (E/F/S)
- Summary Table of the Conclusions and Recommendations of the First External Review (E/F/S)
- The GFAR Chart (First draft)
- Global Framework Programmes (First draft)
- Outline of the GFAR Mid-Term Plan 2001-2003 and the Programme of Work 2001-2003 of the GFAR Secretariat (First draft)
- Financial Report 1998-2000 and Budget Forecast for 2001-2003 (First draft)

From the GFAR STAKEHOLDERS



REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL FORA

Asia-Pacific Region

Two important events took place since June 2000:

- The First Expert Consultation on the Development of an Asia-Pacific Regional Agricultural Information System (APARIS) ; 6 – 7 November, Chiang Rai, Thailand.
- 6th General Assembly of APAARI and Expert Consultation on Strategies for implementing APAARI Vision 2025: Agricultural Research for Development, 8-10 November 2000, Chiang Rai, Thailand.

FROM THE STAKEHOLDERS, continued...

During the 6th General Assembly, a new APAARI Executive Committee has been appointed with Dr. D. Joshy (Nepal), Chairman; Dr. Kumar (Fiji), Vice-Chairman and Dr. R.S. Paroda as Executive Secretary.

For more information, see www.apaari.org

Central Asia & Caucasus Region

The CGIAR Program for Sustainable Agricultural Development in Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC) held its third Steering Committee meeting in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 30 May – 01 June 2000. Substantial progress on Program development and implementation of Program activities were noted by all participants. For more information, please contact:

PFU-Tashkent@cgiar.org.uz

Latin America-Caribbean Region

Three major events took place in the LAC Region over the last couple of months:

- The FORAGRO General Assembly, 6 – 8 September, in Mexico. One important result was the adoption by representatives of more than 30 countries of a Mexico Declaration on "Agricultura con conocimiento". For more information, see: <http://www.iicanet.org/foragro/Reunion/Mexico2000.asp>
- The 5th Annual Meeting of the Executive Committee of FONTAGRO, 20 – 22 September, Beltsville and Washington USA. For more information, see: <http://www.fontagro.org>
- A Forum on integration of agri-food and agro-industrial technologies in Mercosur organized by PROCISUR on 16 November, Montevideo, Uruguay. For more information, see: <http://www.procisur.org.uy/programa.pdf>

Four institutions actively involved in ARD in the LAC Region, namely CIMMYT, CIAT, CIP and COSUDE, have established a Task Force with the aim to create a Regional Foundation for Agricultural Research and Development, FRIDA (Fundacion Regional de Investigacion y Desarrollo Agricola). For more information, contact: jbolanos@guate.net or cimmyt@guate.net.

Sub-Saharan Africa Region (SSA)

Each of the three sub-regional organizations of FARA has recently organized consultative or coordination meetings:

ASARECA held two Committees of Directors:

- The 14th Meeting in conjunction with the annual consultative forum for work plan review and programming, 07 – 15 July in Antananarivo, Madagascar
- The 15th Meeting on 16 – 18 November in Nairobi, Kenya. For more information, contact: asareca@imul.com

WECARD/CORAF organized its first General Assembly on 17 – 21 July in Dakar, Senegal. For more information, see: <http://www.coraf.org>

West Asia & North Africa Region (WANA)

AARINENA has held an Executive Committee Meeting on 17 – 18 September in Malta and has organized jointly with FAO and CLAES, Egypt, a Workshop on Regional Information System for the WANA Region on 2 – 4 October in Gaiza, Egypt.

The Report of the main conclusions of the workshop is available on EGFAR. More recently, AARINENA and EFARD, the European Forum on ARD, have initiated discussions to launch a "virtual Mediterranean Forum on ARD". A working group under the co-responsibility of CIHEAM and ICARDA will soon become operational.

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH (CGIAR)



A major milestone in the process of change initiated by the CGIAR has been the International Centers' Week of October 2000 (ICW00). The new "CGIAR Vision and Strategy" has been adopted by the CGIAR during that session. At ICW00, the CGIAR has also decided to establish a Steering Group for Change Design and Management and a Change Design and Management Team (CDMT) to generate concrete proposals for improving the CGIAR's governance, organization and structure. Review and decision on the proposals made by the CDMT are expected in May 2001 in Durban, South Africa during the CGIAR Mid-Term Meeting. For more information see: www.cgiar.org

The ADVANCED RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS (ARIS)

The European Forum for Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD) has held several meetings during the last couple of months and has pursued the dialogue with other regional fora, in particular with AARINENA for the WANA Region, exploring the possibility to launch a "Virtual Mediterranean Forum on ARD". For more information on EFARD, see: http://www.dainet.de/european_forum/.

The Italian NARS Forum met for the second time in Firenze on 15 September 2000. The report of the meeting is available through the IAO web site: www.iao.florence.it/

For the North American ARIs, new contacts have been established with USDA and Cornell University for the USA and the dialogue continues with different Canadian institutions to improve their representation and participation in GFAR.

Most of the Asia – Pacific ARIs are members of APAARI and have therefore attended and actively participated in the 6th General Assembly of APAARI. For more information, see: www.apaari.org

From the GFAR STAKEHOLDERS



The NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS)

GFAR NGO Working Group established

In addition to their representation at the global level in the GFAR Steering Committee, the NGOs have recently nominated regional representatives to liaise more closely with the regional and sub-regional fora.

The NGO-WG is composed of Mario Ahumada (MAELA, Chile) for Latin America and Caribbean; Angelina Briones (MASIPAG / IFOAM, Philippines) for Asia; Mutizwa Mukute PELUM, Zimbabwe) for Subsaharan Africa; George Kurzom (MA'AN, Palestine) for WANA; Levan Paposhvili (Dika) and Mariam Jorjadze (ELKANA, Georgia) for Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC); and Ann Waters-Bayer (AGRECOL Germany / ETC Ecoculture, Netherlands) for Europe.

An NGO Web site is now operational

The CGIAR NGO Committee has now established its own website managed by the Center for Research, Education and Development (CIED) in Peru. It can be accessed at: www.infoperu.org/ngoc-cgiar

Changes in CGIAR NGO Committee membership

During ICW00, the CGIAR NGO Committee (NGOC) bids farewell to Drs. Miguel Altieri (Latin America), Julian Gonsalves (Asia), and Assetou Kanoute (Africa) who will finish their term in the Committee in December 2000. At the same time, two new members, Monica Kapiro from Uganda and Mutizwa Mukute from Zimbabwe were welcomed as they will be joining the Committee on 1 January 2001. Anthony Quezon from the Philippines will be proposed to the CGIAR Secretariat as the Asian candidate to replace Julian Gonsalves. Ann Waters-Bayer will then assume the Chair of the NGOC.

An NGO – Donors' Meeting organized during ICW00

The NGO Committee, in collaboration with the GFAR Secretariat, organized during ICW00 a meeting between NGOs, donors and other interested parties to discuss NGO-led proposals on agro-ecology and natural resources management. The meeting aroused considerable interest and the dialogue between the NGOs, the donors and some CG centers initiated during this meeting is being pursued.

The FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS (FOs)



Both the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) and Via Campesina played an active role in the last GFAR meetings in Washington.

Also, IFAP is currently revisiting and improving its Web site : www.ifap.org. The GFAR Secretariat has initiated consultations with both organizations to develop the FOs Website of EGFAR.

IFAP to establish an expert group to support GFAR

At the end of November, the IFAP Executive Committee decided that an expert group drawn from the IFAP network of national farmers' organizations was essential in order to strengthen farmers' input into the GFAR process. This new IFAP Support and Liaison Group to GFAR will be chaired by Mr. Leonardo Montemayor, a peasant leader from Free Farmers' Federation of the Philippines, Vice-President of IFAP and IFAP representative to the GFAR Steering Committee.

The PRIVATE SECTOR

Changes have taken place in the representatives of the Private Sector to the GFAR Steering Committee. The GFAR Steering Committee has welcome the nominations of:

- **Patrick Heffer**, Assistant to the Secretary General, FIS/ASSINSEL (International Seed Trade Federation / International Association of Plant Breeders). These two associations have decided in May 2000 to merge in a new association with the name of International Seed Federation (ISF). The merger will become effective in May 2002. For more information on FIS/ASSINSEL, see: www.worldseed.org.
- **Barry Thomas**, Director, Aventis Crop Science. For more information on Aventis Crop Science, see: www.aventis.com/cropsc/cro_main.htm.

The Donor Community

In its meeting of 24 October 2000, the GFAR Donor Support Group, under the Chairmanship of IFAD, has endorsed the main conclusions and recommendations of the GFAR External Review. The suggestion to develop a GFAR funding strategy based on three-year planning and financing cycles was supported by the members who agreed to explore with their respective administrations the feasibility to support multi-year programs.

The European Commission has agreed to represent the donor community in the GFAR Steering Committee, aside IFAD as Chair of the DSG. The current representative of the European Commission to GFAR is: Dr. Uwe Werblow, from DG-DEV. For more information on DG-DEV and DG-Research, see: http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/development/index_en.htm and http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/research/index_en.html