



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

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In This Issue

The GFAR Secretariat Staff just came back from Zurich, which hosted the fourth EFARD Conference. During this Conference, responding to changing global needs, the urgency and the relevant means to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were recurrent issues expressed by the participants. The main output of the Conference was the Zurich Declaration which underscores the collective challenge of addressing these issues and the important role of agricultural research as an engine for rural development in the light of global fight against hunger and poverty.

One way for GFAR to contribute to the debate is to draw the attention of stakeholders on the specific role that a multi-stakeholder research and innovation process can play to in renewing the international agricultural research agenda. Improvement of the livelihoods of the rural poor leads to pay more attention on how research can improve the efficiency and sustainability of family agriculture which is expected to generate incomes for the smallholders, thus linking them to market. This issue features an article written by our colleagues from EMBRAPA in Brazil, highlighting this strong southern NARS' policy and its vision of research's contribution to family agriculture.

Following this feature article, you will go through some news on the GFAR Secretariat's activities. Significant achievements within the DURAS Project can now be of some interest to think about the lessons learned from this innovative competitive grant mechanism. The launching of a second inter-regional consultation will clarify our expectations to move forward within the ICM4ARD framework.

A selected set of key issues and events follows. As you browse through this issue, you will see a healthy portfolio of activities, some of which were significantly facilitated by the GFAR Secretariat. With the exception of Central Asia and the Caucasus whose regional fora needs further support in terms of building its capacity to act as true fora, you will note that most of our RFs are actively engaging their stakeholders through the various activities they have carried out in the past months.

Finally, this issue of the GFAR electronic newsletter provides us a glimpse of a network civil society organizations called the Arab Network for Sustainable Agriculture Development (ANSAD). An article on CSOs contribution in achieving MDGs is presented at the end of this issue.

Bonne lecture !

JF.G

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Embrapa and Family Agriculture in the Brazilian Semi-Arid

The Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation – Embrapa started studying family agriculture in the 80's, mainly in the Northeast region, where it was found that technologies generated or adapted in experimental stations were poorly disseminated among what were called "small-scale producers". The National Agricultural Research System has been efficient in modernizing Brazilian agriculture and has contributed to large increases in agricultural production. However, the modernization process has been selective and a source of social and territorial discrimination, particularly with respect to farmers in the semi-arid region of the country.

In order to deal with agricultural modernization of this neglected sub-sector, Embrapa's orientation for the tropical semi-arid region has been based on international references to agrarian policies, and from which a European agricultural model was chosen. As a result, Embrapa has studied, together with farmers, the potential of family agriculture for achieving modern and equitable development in rural areas.

As a starting point, action-research and farming system methodologies were used at the farm level to bring together the production experiences of family farmers. The results clearly show that the problem of technology viability cannot be separated from other components such as social organization and rural credit. It was therefore decided to embark on a new stage of local development, using an approach that brings together local actors in a project, from which plans and programs emerge, and creating the conditions for local actors to negotiate the necessary support for the project's implementation. The results demonstrate the potential of family agriculture and the need for defining specific public policies to support it.

Embrapa Tropical Semi-Arid has undertaken several experiences involving active partnerships with rural communities. From this cooperation, methodological tools have been produced (zoning,

typology, among others) and a reflection on the possibilities for the development of family farm. Together with other institutions, Embrapa Tropical Semi-Arid has contributed to the recognition by the State of family agriculture and as a consequence the establishment of specific public policies, such as PRONAF, the National Family Agriculture Program.

PRONAF was conceived with the objective of providing support to rural development, and based on the principle of strengthening family agriculture as a source of jobs and income, "so as to establish a new model of sustainable development which aims at achieving satisfaction and welfare of farmers and consumers with respect to economic, social and environmental problems, producing a new pattern of national agricultural" (BRASIL, 1996, p.11).

Besides choosing family agriculture as the target for its actions, PRONAF assumes, in its orientation and implementation, a mode of decentralized and participative administration, through Municipal Councils for Rural Development (CMDR), which guarantee majority membership for family farmers. This proposal represents a change in the methodology for intervention of the State on rural development.

Today, the main challenge for Embrapa is to deal with the diversity of family agriculture and to implement differentiated projects, respecting the specific situations of different farmer categories – a project of integration, which aims at widening and consolidating the participation of family farms in markets, for those that have the means, either through complementing them with agro-industries, or developing "organic product chains". In addition, there is a project for social inclusion, which addresses those family farmers that face production difficulties. This combines social policies for the establishment of infrastructure and the development of economic activities for job creation. This is, for example, the big challenge for the "Fome Zero" (No Hunger) Project - PFZ, which distinguishes between emergency support actions and those of a structural nature.

In 2003, Embrapa Tropical Semi-Arid, together with the Extraordinary

Ministry for Food Safety and Fighting Hunger, FAO, CIRAD and two local NGOs, has been involved in the PFZ. The project supports the development of family farm production activities based on a process of capacity building and apprenticeship for local rural development actors. The main objective is the elaboration of a technical and organizational road map, methods and tools, which can be disseminated by the program. The proposal contemplates:

- Carrying out a diagnostic study for the identification of the limitations, potentialities and proper use of the natural resources of the region and the generation of information about the agrarian and agricultural systems, so that farmers and development agents can recognize and integrate their knowledge and their practices. The results of the diagnostic study are also the support for discussion and programming of projects with the population (at community level) or with representatives of support institutions (at municipal and micro-regional level).
- Process of adaptation of technologies developed in 'field schools', in cooperation with groups of farmers/researchers. These activities foster the integration of researchers and the creation of new relationships between them and the communities, based on knowledge interchange.
- Capacity building of rural development agents and farmers. This has the objective of facilitating both the diffusion (geographic extension) and the consolidation and continuity of the program's actions. The central idea is that farmers themselves assume the extension process and that the intervention of the institutions is limited to providing technical support and the necessary methodological and pedagogic tools. This option is valid for the stages of the diagnostic study, programming and the validation of technologies.

Embrapa focuses its work on technological production solutions to consolidate a renewed and sustainable family agriculture, which take into account social and geographic diversity, and favoring social integration and support for all possible economic opportunities. Today, the

elements of the approach – co-existing with the reality of the semi-arid, making use of biodiversity, rational use of external inputs, pursuit of autonomy, diversification of economic activities and recognition of the multi-functionality of agriculture - are shared by civil society groups. On such group is the "Semi-Arid Joint Endeavor", which is an umbrella group that brings together more than 700 institutions working in a coordinated fashion to improve livelihoods in the region.

Jean Philippe Tonneau
Pedro Carlos Gama da Silva

GFAR Secretariat News

Main milestones: MTM and forthcoming GFAR Steering Committee Meeting

This is the first edition of the newsletter for this year, which shows signs of being a very busy one for the Secretariat. We are just a quarter of the way and it feels like we are close to the end of the year. The Secretariat participated in the organization of a number of meetings and facilitated the participation of several GFAR member organizations in such meetings. For example, in March (7th to 9th) in collaboration with AARINENA a workshop was held in Antalya, Turkey to move forward the development of the Global Post Harvest Initiative. Some more information on this workshop is provided below under the news from regional fora section. In April (13th to 15th), FORAGRO held its 4th International Conference hosted by the Institute of Crop and Livestock Research in Panama (IDIAP), with a focus on the theme of technological innovation and agri-business priorities. Executive Secretaries and Representatives of other regional Fora participated in the meeting and seized the opportunity during a special panel discussion session on "Intercontinental cooperation under the aegis of the GFAR" to share ideas on how to continue with the implementation of the inter-regional collaboration pillar of the GFAR business plan. During the same month of April (27th to 30th) the European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD) held its fourth triennial conference in Zurich, focused on the theme of European responses

to changing global needs. The Secretariat facilitated and ensured the participation of representatives of GFAR stakeholder groups from Farmers Organizations, NGOS, the private sector and regional fora who actively contributed to the conference, by identifying how Europe could respond to their varied changing needs imposed by current global trends. The Secretariat also organized a special workshop on north-south research partnerships to contribute to on-going discussions on how to ensure that these partnerships work for the mutual benefit of the partners. Some details on all of the above activities are given under news from regional fora section.

The Secretariat is now preparing for two important statutory meetings, the Management Team Meeting scheduled for the 23rd of May in Rome, and the GFAR Steering Committee Meeting that will take place on the 7th of June during the FARA General Assembly (6th to 12th June) in Entebbe Uganda. The Management Team Meeting, which will serve as a preparatory meeting to the Steering Committee, will focus mainly on the GFAR charter review and the GFAR 2006 conference, in order to make appropriate recommendations to the Steering Committee. In addition to these statutory meetings, the Secretariat will organize and host the second meeting of the Stakeholder Committee of the Generation Challenge Programme (GCP) from the 5th to the 6th of May 2005. During this meeting, the committee will conclude discussions on its inputs into four issues of importance to the GCP and to their own constituencies.

Look out for a report on all of these activities in the next edition of the newsletter.

ICM4ARD

Moving forward within the ICM4ARD proposal: the CAIRO Meeting, 10-11 May 2005

Under the GLOBal Alliance of the Regional Agricultural Information Systems (GLOBAL.RAIS), funded by the European Commission, GFAR

Secretariat launched in 2003 and 2004 a set of regional consultations, which culminated in June 2004 with an inter-regional consultation in FAO headquarters, Rome, the main purpose of which was to define a global agenda in the area of ICM for ARD, while achieving economies of scale and synergism to the RAIS. The main output of this meeting was the achievement of the ICM4ARD proposal, endorsed during the GFAR Steering Committee meeting held in Mexico in October 2004.

The total amount of the ICM4ARD project, US\$4M, was perceived as an obvious constraint and would require the establishment of a donor consortium. Therefore the idea to split the ICM4ARD project into a consistent set of "sub-projects" emerged and led to consider the ICM4ARD proposal as a framework for action. To achieve the definition of these "sub-projects", in which the different Regional Fora (RFs) would have to play a key leadership, it was decided to launch a second inter-regional consultation.

This Meeting is about to take place in Cairo, 10-11 May 2005. It will be kindly hosted by the AARINENA-RAIS Colleagues. Considering the ICM4ARD proposal as a global framework for action, the Cairo Meeting is expected to achieve the following objectives:

1. To further discuss on their respective regional Plan of Work and Budget (PoW&B) for 2005 in the area of ICM for ARD and the development of their RAIS;
2. To take stock on existing initiatives involving all principal stakeholders, and to stimulate other initiatives from the Regional Fora in the area of ICM for ARD in order to launch collaborative platforms between and amongst RAIS;
- O.S. 3. To define priorities for GFAR financial support accordingly to (i) regional activities or (ii) inter-regional activities within collaborative platforms;
4. To define a consistent output oriented list of activities and related budget for each of these collaborative platforms that either GFAR Secretariat can support within its own 2005 PoW&B or define complementary proposals, consistent with the ICM4ARD proposals leading to fund raising activities where GFAR Secretariat could play a leading role.

The following are the expected outcomes of the Meeting:

1. Shared vision on the 2005 activities conducted by the various RFs in the area of ICM for ARD;
2. GFAR Secretariat and FAO support to RAIS initiatives defined through a bottom up process;
3. Collaborative platforms and their related POW&B well defined, and follow up mechanisms of these collaborative platforms defined and/or put in place in the 2005 within the GFAR Secretariat budget.

All the documents pertaining to this Meeting can be downloaded from the GFAR web site (<http://www.egfar.org>).

In order to facilitate the launching of so called "collaborative platforms" between various regional Fora and GFAR, two preliminary studies have been conducted. The first one, prepared by Prof. Ajit Maru is a comparative study on the already existing agricultural information systems dealing with information on institutions, experts, research activities and outputs of these activities. The second one, prepared by Prof. Ahmed Rafea, is related to a preliminary proposal of a "collaborative platform" between AARINENA-RAIS and Infos+. These documents are also online available.

JF.G.

DURAS

DURAS 2nd Call for Proposals Outcome



Twelve (12) pre-proposals out of 173 submissions received were selected by the DURAS Selection and Scientific Partnership Committee (CSSP) to advance to full proposal development following its meeting held last 15-16 March 2005 in Montpellier, France.

Of the 173 submissions, 55% focuses on the theme Agro-ecology and other sustainable farming practices, while 45% tackles the theme Linking

farmers to market: support to small and medium agro-enterprises (SMEs).

A Euro 5,000 grant was awarded to each of the 12 selected pre-proposals in order to support the preparation of full proposals. The final selection will be made on the basis of these full proposals in June by the CSSP and DURAS Project's Steering Committee chaired by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Pre-proposals received were reviewed on the basis of the following criteria: (a) over-all project design and feasibility; (b) appropriateness and innovativeness; (c) socio-economic consideration; (d) environmental and sustainability considerations; and (e) partnership quality.

Below are the short-listed pre-proposals.

Theme 3: Agro-ecology and other sustainable farming practices

1. Approche intégrative de la gestion des nématodes phytoparasites en systèmes maraîchers méditerranéens et sahéliens (Société MARISSA (Groupe AZURA- Maroc)
2. Appropriation par les Organisations de Producteurs d'Afrique de l'Ouest de la technologie d'inoculation avec des microorganismes améliorant la production végétale (CLCOP de Keur Momar Sarr-Sénégal)
3. Conditions de l'adoption de systèmes de culture conservateurs de l'environnement par les petits producteurs du Sud (Association pour la Promotion de l'Environnement pour le Développement (APED-Union des Comores)
4. Learning across Borders: Cameroon shares its successful experience in scaling up indigenous domestication practices with farmers in Madagascar through south-south exchange (Fanatsarana ny Farimpianana eny Ambanivohitra-Madagascar)
5. Linking farmers to markets through valorisation of local resources: the case for intellectual property rights of indigenous resources (University of Pretoria-South Africa)
6. Promouvoir l'expérimentation et l'innovation Paysannes pour

Améliorer la Sécurité Alimentaire et la Conservation des Ressources au Sahel (IIED Sahel Sénégal)

Theme 4: Linking farmers to market and support to small and medium agro-enterprises (agri SMEs)

7. Development of sustainable processing technology that facilitates the use of traditional natural under-utilized bio-resources leading to enhanced socio-economic and rural benefits, through local and international marketing of higher quality products (CONFIREL – Cambodia)
8. Improving Efficacy in Product-Chains for Linking Rural Farmers to Profitable Markets and Promote Small and Medium Agro-enterprises in East African Highlands of Tanzania and Ethiopia (Sokoine University of Agriculture-Tanzania)
9. Improving the pig and pig meat marketing chain to enable small producers to serve consumer needs in Vietnam and Cambodia (Vietnam Agricultural Science Institute (VASI))
10. Increasing productivity and income of small scale fruit processors through improved quality assurance and marketing in Tanzania and Uganda (Sokoine University of Agriculture – Tanzania)
11. Poverty and Pace Setters (POPS). From sector support for farm products marketing to targeting entrepreneurs by building networks among poverty struck (Centre for Rural Economic Development Research-Vietnam)
12. Production de malts de sorgho ou de mil de qualité pour la production alimentaire artisanale ou semi-industrielle en Afrique de l'Ouest (CERNA/FSA/UAC-Bénin)

The Competitive Grants was open to all stakeholders involved in agricultural research, provided that the Lead Proponent (LP) – a university, national research center or a civil society organization (CSO) - is from a ZSP (Priority Solidarity Zone) country covered by the project.

Table 1 : Percentage distribution of pre-proposals received per stakeholder and per theme

	Theme 3	Theme 4
NARIS	40 %	29 %
Farmers organization / community-based organizations	1 %	8 %
Universities	24 %	24 %
NGOs	27 %	35 %
Agri-SMEs	6 %	3 %
Others (e.g. Professional organization, IARCs)	2 %	1 %
Total	100 %	100 %

The proposed project should involve (a) a minimum of two (2) countries from the South which may not necessarily be from the same region/sub-region; and (b) at least three (3) stakeholder groups, one of which should either be an NGO, a farmers organization, or an agro-SME. Proponents were required to submit Letter(s) of Intent (LOI) of their collaborating organizations stating their willingness and commitment to participate in the proposed project.

DURAS is a GFAR-Agropolis project supported by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its Priority Solidarity Fund (PSF). It aims to contribute to strengthening the involvement and enhancing the scientific potential of southern stakeholders in agricultural research for sustainable development (ARSD). This three-year project covers countries from Africa, Near East and some parts of Asia that are listed in France's Priority Solidarity Zone (PSZ).

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GFAR Meetings

GFAR 2006 Conference

The next GFAR triennial General conference will be held in 2006. All of the regional fora which are yet to host this conference which was hosted by Germany in 2000 and Senegal in 2003 were consulted as to their willingness and readiness to host the 2006 version. APAARI sent very strong and positive signals, and during the Extraordinary Steering Committee meeting held in December 2004 in Rome, the Executive Secretary of APAARI, Dr Raj Paroda informed the committee of the willingness of the Indian Government to host the Conference in India. The Executive Secretaries of APAARI and GFAR have since then had further discussions with the Indian authorities with regards to the dates, venue and other important details. Based on these preliminary discussions, some recommendations on the dates and venue of the meeting will be presented to the Steering Committee for a discussion and approval during its meeting in Uganda, following which a formal announcement on the venue and dates for GFAR 2006 will be posted on EGFAR.

West Asia & North Africa

AARINENA holds a Global Post-harvest Initiative Planning Meeting in Antalya, Turkey

The Association of Agricultural Research Institutes in the Near East and North Africa, AARINENA, held a planning meeting at the University of Akdeniz in Antalya, Turkey on 24 and 25 March 2005 within the framework of the Global Post-harvest Initiative (GPhI) – Linking Farmers to Markets, which is jointly coordinated by FAO/AGS, GFAR and PhAction,. The objective of the planning meeting was to a) identify cross-cutting needs of AARINENA's four commodity networks (olive, date palm, cotton and medicinal plants) in the area of post-harvest handling, processing, marketing and enterprise development, b) prioritise three

project ideas and c) establish a plan of work for the subsequent development of the ideas into full proposals.

The meeting was attended by 18 persons, including the commodity network coordinators, the leaders of the respective post-harvest working groups for each commodity, resource persons and selected national experts and was held back-to-back with a joint AARINENA - FAO-RNE training on marketing and post-harvest handling and processing of fruits, vegetables and flowers.

The principal outcome of the two-day meeting was the prioritisation of three project ideas, out of a total of 9 that were considered to be of importance for the networks. The three project ideas, and the persons designated to lead the preparation of the corresponding concept notes, are:

1. Market-orientation for the AARINENA networks and their members, convened by Prof. Abdelouahhab Zaid, Coordinator of the Global Date Palm Network;
2. Innovative and effective market-oriented and demand-driven extension services, convened by Mohamed El-Kholy, who represented farmers' organisations;
3. Organic production of olive, cotton, dates and medicinal and herbal plants, convened by Nabeel Abu-Shriha, who represented the NGO sector in the meeting.

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The conveners mentioned above will continue to develop the project ideas in consultation with potential partners. It is expected that concept notes will be available by mid-June. In the mean time, the GPhI Coordinating Committee in Rome will decide the extent to which appropriate services in FAO or in other agencies might be approached to provide technical input and backstopping. Once the three concept notes are completed AARINENA, GFAR and FAO will explore donor interest. In the expectation that at least one will attract attention, a follow-up project design workshop is scheduled for later this year to bring together the partners that would execute the project.

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The Global Post harvest Initiative advances in the Regions:

APAARI Expert Consultation on Post-harvest Technologies for Ensuring Food Security and Value Addition for Enhanced Income in Bangkok, Thailand

The Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), in collaboration with Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and FAO, organized an expert consultation on Post-harvest Technologies for Ensuring Food Security and Value Addition for Enhanced Income from 1-2 December, 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand to co-incide with the APAARI biennial assembly attended by senior institutional representatives.

The expert consultation main objectives were to assess the role of PHT in connecting resource-constrained farmers with the markets in newly emerging trade environment.

In order to capitalize on the assembly of senior personnel from APAARI members, as well as regional expertise in postharvest issues, the consultation also sought to advance implementation of, and agency support for, the "Strategic Framework for a Global Post-harvest Initiative-Linking Farmers to Markets"(GPhI) developed under the auspices of FAO, the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) and PhAction.

An entire session of the PHT Consultation was dedicated to the GPhI. After analyzing the results of the first Asia Pacific Regional Consultation on Post-harvest held in 2001, the outcomes of the International Workshop held in Rome in 2003 which gave birth to the Strategic Framework, and integrating them all with the recent developments and also taking advantage on the "fresh" information which was passed by the previous sessions, four main priority areas were identified: a) Policy, this theme was particularly deemed as a priority by the APAARI region and came out prominently during all the presentations and discussions; b) Food safety and

quality, whose importance had been expressed strongly during the meeting; c) Rural enterprise development and supply chain integration, with particular attention on mechanisms for profitably and equitably linking resource poor farmers to emerging market opportunities; d) Capacity building of different actors and service providers, linked to the stages of development of the post-harvest sector and emphasising technical, policy development and human resource management dimensions.

Working Groups were formed around these four themes, trying to achieve a balance in country representation and relating to the specific interest of the respective institution that each participant was representing

The GPhI session encouraged commitment of stakeholder institutions and organizations to examine their country, institutional needs, roles and resources that could be marshalled in support of the initiative. It also clarified key elements and gaps that could be addressed through regional and/or sub regional programmes.

In wrapping-up the Consultation, Dr Paroda acknowledged the very great interest that has been generated by the Consultation, which both confirms the felt need for concerted actions in the post-harvest area and the imperativeness of complementing the outcomes of the meeting with follow-up actions. He assured the participants that, following further analysis of the results of the Consultation, and in particular the working groups, a plan of action will be developed for their consideration. This could take the form of a consortium, similar to the one established by APAARI for the biotechnology area, or through the selection of specific topics for development into regional or global partnership programs.

A Brief Up-date on APCoAB's Activities

The Second Steering Committee Meeting of APCoAB was held on 30th November, 2005 in Bangkok, Thailand. The minutes were circulated to all the members in January 2005. This brief is about some activities that were undertaken since then:

(i) Meetings Organized

1. A Workshop on "Public Private Partnership in the Use of Agribiotechnology for Sustainable Solutions to Brassica Pest Problems" was organized in New Delhi on 10th February, 2005. The meeting was co-sponsored by AVRDC, APAARI/APCoAB and CIMBAA (Collaboration for Insect Management in Brassica in Asia and Africa). It was attended by professionals from various ministries, representatives from Indian and overseas universities; farmer representatives; international organizations and Private Sector. The issues discussed were related to Public Private Partnership (PPP) for Sustainable Control of Insect Pests of Brassicas, particularly Diamond Black Moth (DBM); biosafety; resistance management; economics and public acceptability of GM vegetable crops. The meeting supported formation of a Consortium (Nunhems Seed Company from private sector and Indian Agricultural Research Institute from public sector) and voiced that international organizations such as FAO should support such initiatives. The partners must ensure acceptability of the technology (also socially and ethically), biosafety issues (in terms of long term impact on environment and management of insect resistance). The technology as far as possible should be scale neutral and thus should benefit both small and marginal farmers. Dr. Vibha Dhawan, APCoAB Coordinator actively participated and provided logistic support.
2. APCoAB also organized a Brainstorming Session on "Public Private Partnership in Agricultural Biotechnology on March 14, 2005 in New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Raj Paroda, Executive Secretary, APAARI and

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it was inaugurated by Dr. G Kalloo, Deputy Director General (Crop Sciences), ICAR. He advocated introspection and reorientation of the research being carried out in public sector and the kind of partnership that can emerge in the field of biotechnology. He highlighted the need of investments in cutting edge technologies such as gene pyramiding; development of gene constructs, molecular markers etc. All participants felt that the Public-Private Partnership is the need of the hour and must be addressed in its right perspective. Dr. Nagarajan, Director, IARI voiced that in fast changing environment, researchers in public institutions must be assisted by Business Development Cell to take care of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), Material Transfer Agreement (MTA); benefit sharing etc. The participants discussed in detailed the changing world scenario making PPP to be highly relevant and discussed various possible models of partnership.

A clear message that emerged was the need of a mutual trust between the partners. Also there is a need to change the entire mindset and bring in corporate culture in public sector institutions. Capacity building should be done in the field of scientific policy and legal matters. It was also voiced that private sector must invest in basic research as well and must have a balance between their profits and meeting their social obligations. In terms of infrastructure, there is a need to set up incubation facilities specially for nurturing start-up companies thereby encouraging early stage innovations through appropriate partnership mechanisms. A brief report highlighting important recommendations of this meeting is attached (Annexure I). These can also be viewed at APCoAB's website (www.apaari.org/APCoAB). These are also being circulated to all concerned and are being printed.

(ii) APCoAB website

The APCoAB website was established as a link to APAARI website. There was some delay in up-dating the information due to Dr. Sahdev Singh's leaving APAARI. This website will now be operated by APCoAB office directly in New Delhi office and the process of

up-dating information has already been initiated.

(iii) Project Proposals

- A proposal has been submitted to Dr. He Changchui, ADG, FAO for Ministerial Level Conference to be organized during mid – 2006.
- A project proposal is being submitted to Dr. Ola Smith, Executive Secretary, GFAR for organizing a regional conference on Biosafety and Regulatory Mechanisms.

(iv) Upcoming APCoAB Publications

- A flyer on APCoAB was published earlier and circulated widely.
- There had been some delay in bringing out status reports on Transgenic Maize in Philippines and Bt Cotton in India. These two status reports are being finalized by Dr. Vibha Dhawan. In the transgenic maize paper, there will be a concluding chapter by Dr. Rey Eborá et al. (paper initially attempted by that group) and in the Bt cotton validation is being done by Mr. Raju Barwale and Dr. S. R. Rao.
- Proceedings of Public – Private Partnership Workshop are presently in the press.

(v) Participation in Meetings/Workshop

APCoAB Coordinator participated in the following meetings:

- National Consultation on Liability and Redress in the Context of Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety organized by Prof. Bharat H. Desai, Jawaharlal Nehru Chair in International Environmental Law, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi on 28 – 29 March, 2005. It was sponsored by the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India in association with Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL), New Delhi.
- Workshop on "The Safety Assessment of Genetically Modified Foods" organized by South Asia Biosafety Program (SABP) on 11 – 12 April, 2005 in association with Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL), New Delhi.

- Second Meeting of Representatives of Capacity Building Projects in Agricultural Biotechnology Communications organized on 15 April, 2005 by South Asia Biosafety Program (SABP)-India.

(vi) Recruitment of APCoAB Coordinator

In view of Dr. Vibha Dhawan's departure effective 1st May, 2005, steps have been taken to readvertise the position through ICRISAT and last date is already over. The shortlisting of the candidates is being done. It is proposed to have the interviews organized sometime by June end. Meanwhile, the services of Dr. R.K. Arora, former Director NBPGR and Head of IPGRI South-Asia office in New Delhi has been requested to work as Consultant so that work is not disrupted. ...

Sub-Saharan Africa



A FARA-RAIS task force is established

FARA held a regional consultation on the 11th of January, in Accra, to establish its FARA-RAIS task force following recommendations from stakeholders consultation last April 2004. The participants, were mainly the SROs, GFAR and regional partners to define its Terms of Reference and an action plan.

It was agreed that the Taskforce will report to the FARA Executive Secretary who in turn reports to the FARA Executive Committee. This will ensure effective management, considering that FARA-RAIS is one of the region-wide programs of FARA.

Full members of the Taskforce are representatives of: FARA, ASARECA, CORAF, SADC/FANR and GFAR. One NARS for each subregion will be nominated by the corresponding SRO to be part of the taskforce but representation will be rotated among the subregion. Observers will be invited and identified either from international organizations and other RAIS depending on issues or areas to

be discussed.

The Taskforce has the following mandate:

- To review, discuss and endorse the action plan for the FARA-RAIS program;
- To monitor progresses of the FARA-RAIS through a standard format;
- To advice FARA on ICT/ICM issues, including technical and policy guidelines and issues of standards (to the RAIS, S-RAIS and NAIS);
- To follow-up on current developments at regional and inter-regional levels in order to identify and promote innovations in ICM4ARD;
- To advice on source of funding;
- To play the role of "Ambassadors" of the RAIS.

During this Meeting, and based on the plan of action presented by SROs, the following common areas of activities were identified:

- A) Definition, implementation and monitoring of an Information System on experts (contacts), ongoing activities, institutions and technologies (outputs) relevant in ARD. Dr Giovannetti reminded the participants that this issue was a major output of all the regional consultations held during the Global-RAIS Project, and that this issue is also a major issue in order to foster inter-regional co-operation. The means identified to achieve this Information System were: (i) expert consultations, (ii) face-to-face workshops, and (iii) Open & Distance Learning contents (ODL);
- B) NARS leaders sensitisation enabling them to advocate on ICT enabled agricultural information systems;
- C) Strengthening FARA-RAIS and its S-RAIS, including development of Communities of Practices (CoPs);
- D) Training Need Assessment (TNA), including organization of training workshops on ICT/ICM;
- E) Strengthening National Focal Points in order to develop the sub-regional and regional networking.

JF.G & Myra

Sub-Saharan Africa

Saharan Africa – Challenge Programme call for Expression of interest

In mid-December 2004, FARA sent out a call for Expression of Interest in providing Facilitation and Mentoring services, Impact assessment Services and in the implementation of the IARD4D to all stakeholders. Many stakeholders responded rapidly and within the deadline imposed. This shows the great level of interest in the SSA Challenge Programme (SSA-CP). Perhaps more importantly, is the fact that participation in implementing the SSA-CP was open to all stakeholders by FARA, and not limited to only researchers and research institutions. It is also gratifying that stakeholders other than research institutions responded, and as you will see on the FARA website (www.fara-africa.org) NGOs, Farmers' organizations and the private sector responded and will compete with research institutions for the honour of working with FARA. This new way of carrying out research for development reflects the spirit and letter of GFAR, and we commend FARA for this bold step, and hope that this will serve as an inspiration to others. We will continue to monitor the subsequent participation of all stakeholders in this important endeavour.

O.S.

Latin America & the Caribbean

FORAGRO:

Highlights of the Panama Meeting

About 130 persons participated in the 4th International Conference of FORAGRO which was hosted by the Instituto de Investigacion Agropecuaria de Panama (IDIAP). The objective of the Conference was to: dialogue and brainstorm in order to provide ideas and suggestions that could be used at national and regional levels for the formulation and implementation of policies and activities for the development of an innovative, knowledge-based agri-business driven agriculture. In order to address this objective, presentations and discussions were organized into 4

sessions: political and economic context and challenges of agriculture and agri-business; global and regional systems of knowledge; institutional dimensions and integration and a final session on conclusion and the final declaration of Panama. These plenary sessions were supplemented with parallel small group discussions focused on thematic issues of: genetic resources and agriculture, sustainable natural resources management; agribusiness innovation; new agrobiotechnologies; management of scientific information, which correspond to the main elements of the FORAGRO plan of action.

Some of the highlights of the meeting were:

- A) Active participation of representatives of other regional fora. The session on global and regional systems of knowledge comprised four series of panel discussions kicked off first by a panel discussion on Inter-Continental cooperation under the aegis of the Global Forum and Regional Research Fora, followed the second one on Inter-continental Research System of the CGIAR and developed countries, during which representatives of CIRAD from France, INIA from Spain, USDA from the United States, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada from Canada, CIMMYT and the Global Diversity Trust presented their current and future areas of research interests. The third part of this session was devoted to presentations from the various sub-regional programmes of FORAGRO i.e. the PROCIS, as well as FONTAGRO the funding mechanism set up in the region to support agricultural research. Finally the fourth part focused on the FORAGRO plan of action to bring out its priority themes. The idea was to examine areas for potential collaboration among these four distinct entities.
- B) The first panel discussion on inter-continental cooperation under the aegis of GFAR and regional fora saw an active participation of all the regional fora including EFARD which sent in a paper for the purpose and NAFAR. The Executive Secretary of GFAR presented an overview paper on global agricultural research partnerships as a response to



challenges facing the agricultural sector. He suggested that various forms of research partnerships especially multi-stakeholder and interregional collaboration could provide solutions to some of the problems the facing the sector in several developing countries using the GLOBAL.RAIS project of GFAR as illustrative example. Representatives of the various regional fora then made presentations which high-lighted the characteristics of their respective regions, their own focus areas of research, their strengths and opportunities which could be made available to or shared with other regions in response to the inter-regional collaboration aspect of the work of GFAR. All of the Executive Secretaries of RF present at the meeting later met to brainstorm on how to capitalize on the rich information presented during the session and move forward on the implementation of the planned interregional collaborative activities. The discussion will be continued at the next Executive Secretaries meeting planned for the 8th of June during the FARA General Assembly.

C) Another highlight of the meeting was the presence of up to 20 parliamentarians (Parlatino) from the region. They participated actively in the deliberations, and were doubtlessly sensitised to the problems confronting the research system and the importance of policy and political support to the system so that it can play a meaningful role in solving problems confronting the agriculture sector, which is still and will continue to be an important contributing sector to economic growth in the region. The participation of the legislators culminated in the signing of a FORAGRO-PARLATINO agreement designed to provide a new partnership between policy makers and the advocates of Science and Technology development for the benefit of agricultural development and rural prosperity. The agreement also stipulated that the two parties will henceforth invite each other to their respective meetings when appropriate in order to nurture the relationship to their mutual benefits. This is a giant step taken by FORAGRO on the path towards

influencing policy makers, and we wish them well.

D) The conference produced a PANAMA declaration from which we reproduce some excerpts to highlight its importance.

i) We, the participants in the Fourth International Meeting of FORAGRO, comprising universities, NGOs, public research institutions, producers, the private sector, the global research system, technical and financial cooperation mechanisms and agencies, advanced research systems and members of the Latin American Parliament, acting on our own behalf, consider that, as part of the process of modernizing agriculture and agribusiness, it is necessary to strengthen a hemispheric agenda for technological innovation and promote greater articulation of same with the global R&D System, with a view to contributing to a significant increase in the production and quality of foods and to the improvement of the agricultural trade balance through competitiveness.

The categories of participants listed reflects very well the inclusiveness and strategic partnership concept of GFAR, and we hope this will continue to be reflected in future concrete activities undertaken by FORAGRO. A number of such activities were featured in the declaration some of which we highlight below.

ii) To encourage the combined use of traditional, conventional and new technologies to obtain processes, products and services that are socially and economically beneficial, of the highest quality and safe vis-à-vis the environment, agriculture and human health.

iii) To promote the implementation of the priority topics agreed upon at FORAGRO Brasilia 2002.... the following being the most important in terms of hemispheric cooperation: Conservation, characterization and use of genetic resources; Sustainable management of

natural resources, especially soil, water and biodiversity; Development and use of new agricultural biotechnologies; Development of scientific and technological information systems; Promotion of innovations aimed at the development of agribusiness; Promotion and development of innovations applicable to family agriculture.

iv) Within the framework of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research, to participate actively in interregional cooperative research efforts in areas of research that are of priority to and impact on the Americas, through strategic partnerships with the Global Forum and the regional agricultural research forums in other regions of the world.

O.S.

Europe

GFAR active in the European Agriculture Research for Development conference held in Zurich

The European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD) held its biannual meeting at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH Zurich) in Zurich, Switzerland from 27 to 29 April 2005. Over 300 participants from Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America attended the conference whose theme was 'European Response to Changing Global Needs'.

The Conference addressed three themes. Theme 1 dealt with 'Global challenges and Responses of Agricultural Research for Development (ARD)' and was handled in four sub-sessions. Among the major recurring common issues stressed by speakers during the first and second sessions on 'changing global needs' and 'Stakeholder perspectives' were:

- The multi-functionality of the rural areas, and the need to link across sectors to achieve the poverty and hunger targets of the millennium development goals (MDG)

- the underinvestment in agricultural research for development by both developed and developing governments
- the vacuum in developing countries in research and extension as governments have reduced the role of the state
- the need for more efficient and effective partnerships for tackling the constraints to development, and
- the economic and moral obligations that governments, institutions and individuals all have to seriously address poverty and hunger.

In these two sessions, members of GFAR management and Steering Committee played a prominent role by making 5 out of the 11 presentations. The two remaining sessions in Theme 1 tabled the European response to the above challenges articulated in the Conference Issues paper, and described the various institutions and coordinating mechanisms available to implement those responses.

Theme 2 looked at 'Innovations through Partnerships in Agricultural Research for Development' and was opened by three plenary presentations on the ecological, social, and economic and policy dimension of ARD respectively. The ecological dimension was illustrated through the International Potato Center's approach to integrating research across hierarchies from germplasm through integrated crop management, integrated natural resource management and on to the relation between agriculture and health. The social dimension was illustrated in relation to developing local capacity to innovate and the partnerships among R&D institutions required to achieve success. With respect to the economic and policy dimension, the participants were challenged to spend less time articulating among themselves and more time in engaging with others, especially the policy makers. The speaker said that institutional change needs to be faster, and if the capacity divide between North and South continues to widen, the North's efforts will lose relevance. These presentations were followed by a parallel session with contributions from selected participants on 'ARD Approaches through ARD partnerships' and a session of 11 parallel workshops. For more

information on the GFAR organised workshop on North-South partnerships: guidelines, challenges, success stories and the way forward see the summary report in this newsletter.

Theme 3 considered the Future Agenda of ARD, with presentations by the European Commission on the 7th Framework Programme for investing in ARD and which clearly illustrated the re-emergence of agriculture on the R&D agenda, by GFAR on the ARD priorities of the regional fora, and by the Polish Minister of Agriculture on strengthening the contribution to ARD of the new EU member countries. These were complemented by a presentation by the Director of the Kenyan Agricultural Research Institution on the extent to which developing countries explicitly address ARD in their poverty reduction strategies. This theme concluded by revisiting the Conference issues paper based on the input received from participants and the presentation and discussion of the Conference Declaration which outlines 10 commitments for EFARD members and (see news item below for further details). In the wrap up of the meeting, participants were encouraged to strengthen their solidarity with the rest of the world, reiterate their commitment to making contributions to meeting the MDG and to increasingly link research on agriculture with other sectors such as food security and health, the environment.

Europe

ERA Net: Launching of a "coordinating action" in agricultural research for development in Europe

Europe has a strong tradition in Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) and its Member States invest considerably in agricultural research to support sustainable development in the poorer nations. As many as 10 000 scientists are involved in projects in this field, while the total amount of financial resources invested may exceed €1 billion. Yet, despite this substantial commitment, there is very limited coordination between the ARD programmes of Member States,

the various European Commission-funded projects, or the numerous European and international bodies currently addressing ARD research. Predictably, this fragmentation leads to conflicts of interest, unnecessary competition and a duplication of efforts – in short, a significant waste of resources.

Within the 6th European Union's Framework Programme, an innovative ERA-NET Scheme was established "to step up the cooperation and coordination of national or regional research activities through networking of programmes including their mutual opening and the development and implementation of joint activities". An ERA-NET on ARD (named ERA-ARD) has then been formed to establish coherence and collaboration in European ARD. The ERA-NET brings together decision-makers from ministries, donor agencies and national public research organisations of 11 Member States representing the critical mass necessary to drive forward the harmonisation and integration of Europe's ARD effort.

This "Coordination Action" on European ARD has been launched on 1 April 2005 for a total duration of 4 years and a budget close to 3 million euros. It is mapping all ARD activities and administrative structures in participating countries to highlight synergies, duplications and best management practice. Participants will then select two sub-programmes for joint activity, leading to transnational activities with shared funding and administration. This streamlining will benefit developing nations directly, and help Europe meet its commitments to fight global poverty and hunger.

R.B.

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CSOs

NGOs Meeting announcement

Regional NGO Consultation Meeting, Entebbe, Uganda

The Global Forum on Agriculture Research (GFAR) and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) are organizing a regional NGO consultation meeting to be held during the FARA's General Assembly 6-12 June 2005 in Entebbe, Uganda.

The main purpose of the meeting is to launch a Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) NGO Consortium that would facilitate and coordinate NGOs contribution and participation in agricultural research and development at all levels in SSA region. For more information please contact GFAR-Secretariat@fao.org. You can download the meeting brochure here: http://www.egfar.org/tools/pdf/CSO_Brochure.pdf

CSOs

Profile article: ANSAD



ANSAD: Developing a vision for cooperation in the field of sustainable agriculture among NGOs and assessment of the gap that exist between the interests of experts and expectations of farmers in the field of sustainable agriculture in Western Asia and North Africa's Arabic speaking countries.

After 18 months of preparation and networking, twenty non-governmental agricultural organizations, eight distinguished farmers' organizations, and six researchers and experts in the field of agricultural development held a symposium in Tunisia in August 1998 to discuss the development of sustainable agriculture in the Western Asia and North Africa's Arabic speaking nations.

During the conference a thorough review was made about the conditions of sustainable agriculture programs and policies in the Arab world. The review was basically based on the experiences and initiatives made by individuals, organizations, and experts in agricultural development. In addition, the participants discussed the ability of agricultural systems and programs to achieve sustainability by presenting a set of analytical tools that are used in sustainable agriculture.

Conference outcomes were the following:

- Formulation of a common understanding of what sustainable agriculture involves and unifying the concepts used to describe sustainable agriculture as a way of improving communication and exchange of expertise as well as synchronizing the efforts of participating countries;
- Development of a program to assist some organizations in their developmental plans.
- Based on the recommendations of the participants, a committee of five NGOs was created to implement the recommendations of the symposium. The selection criteria for members of this committee were based on the geographic location and capacity of the NGO.

These five organizations are regarded among the largest organizations in their countries and have many years of experience in promotion of developmental efforts. Their committee will mainly target small farmers and rural communities in general, and will depend on community participation methods in assessing the needs of its target groups, and planning, implementing, evaluating and monitoring its programs. In addition, these five organizations will focus their activities on environmental issues that concern human development, land rehabilitation and animal wealth.

In order to take the decision to establish the Network this committee met in Jerash, Jordan in October 2000 with other Arab organizations to form the Arab Network for Sustainable Agriculture Development (ANSAD). These organizations include: the Egyptian Coptic Evangelical

Association for Social Services; Agricultural Development Society (formerly known as The Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees); Apel of Tunis; The Agricultural Cooperative Union of Yemen; ANDA Association of Morocco; the Jordanian Association for Bedouin Development & Combat Desertification and Noor AlHussein Foundation; Syrian Land Association; and Mauritanian Developmental Association.

During the Jerash meeting, many pressing issues raised the **Necessity** for the immediate involvement of all parties in the Arabic countries in the sustainable agriculture system. These issues include:

- the dramatic increase in the level of pollution in the Arab world and which is already costing Arab countries more than 13 billion dollars each year;
- the scarcity of water resources in which 24% (65 million) of Arab population do not have access to source of portable; and
- the agricultural resources available in Arab research centers and universities are not being utilized for sustainable agriculture development.

Based upon the fact that local communities always embraced values of voluntary work and providing assistance to one another and to the community as a whole. They also had a clear sense of stewardship towards their human and natural resources. Somehow, during the process of economic and technological development which the Arab world went through, this sense of stewardship was left undeveloped. Although it is still embodied in the culture, stewardship towards human and natural resources has played a very minor role in developing modern Arab communities. One of the main objectives of ANSAD is therefore to enhance and develop this sense of stewardship towards the environment.

ANSAD Objectives are

- to strengthening agricultural NGOs in Arab countries and enhance their ability of evaluating, monitoring agricultural practices and publish best practices in agriculture;
- to support farmers in areas of the Network's operation and enable

them to use agricultural practices that lead to sustainable development;

- to encourage the establishment of communication channels among the different organizations and associations and their target groups on all local and regional levels;
- to encourage the establishment of specialized societies and bodies to support sustainable agriculture development in Arab countries,
- to create a directory of available scientific, technical, and practical expertise in Arab countries;
- to initiate advocacy efforts to formulate the necessary supportive legislation for sustainable agriculture; and
- to document the inherited skills and experiences in the Arab World that relate to sustainable agriculture development and facilitate the exchange of these experiences among the different communities

Mission: ANSAD's mission is to reinforce the acquired practices in the field of sustainable agriculture and introducing new techniques in this field in a manner that preserves the various agricultural environments in the Arab countries.

To address both its objectives and mission, ANSAD in collaboration with the farmers' organizations and other regional/sub-regional NGOs carries number of activities these include:

- **Training and Capacity Building:** Depending on its data and collected information specialized training courses in the fields of drip irrigation, Integrated Pest Management, community participation, farmers' management groups, were conducted in the needed Arabic countries and according to their needs assessment.
- **Education and Public Awareness:** To introduce the concept of sustainable agriculture and raise awareness and enrich the beneficiaries' information specialized publications and manuals in Sustainable Agriculture issued and published at the regional level.
- **Volunteers for Development:** Stewardship of both natural and human resources is enhanced through a well organized voluntary

work campaign. Stewardship of human resources includes consideration of social responsibilities such as working and living conditions of laborers, the needs of rural communities, and consumer health and safety both in the present and the future. Stewardship of land and natural resources involves maintaining or enhancing this vital resource base for the long term. ANSAD through a well organized volunteers' mobilization program engaged experts, professionals and agricultural leaders to volunteer with NGOs in the member Arabic countries working in the agricultural field on a temporary basis. The topics identified and the experts allocated according to needs and acceptance of the hosting NGO/ country. Creating an information database about volunteers: The database managed volunteers' applications and post their information in an official site over the internet

- **Studies and Research:** To activate field research, that is connected to issues and challenges faced by farmers in their farms and to help in solving the emerging natural resources depletion problems, many studies and research were conducted in the fields of utilizing wastewater and gray water in irrigation, organic farming and practices, integrated pest management and proper use of available land and water for maximum production. ANSAD also conducts Needs Assessment studies to prioritize the needs of Arab NGOs and their target groups of farmers.
- **Advocacy and lobbying:** ANSAD established a lobbying and advocacy program for the issues faced by Arab Agriculture on local, national and global levels.
- **Establishment of local networks:** ANSAD by-laws included the procedures and steps towards the establishment of local networks for active organizations in the agricultural sector in the Arab countries.
- **National, regional and International Collaboration:** ANSAD is very much involved in some relevant national and regional programs and networks which contribute to the exchange of experience between farmers and experts in sustainable agriculture issues. Many training

courses were conducted at the regional level in different Arabic countries for example: Regional Farmers training workshop on modern irrigation techniques (Jordan), organic farming (Yemen), Drip Irrigation (Mauritania), Composting (Morocco). Now ANSAD is in its way to making connections and joint projects with the (GEF) Global Environment Facility and UN Convention to Combat Desertification, World Bank Sustainable Development Group, and GFAR-FAO.

Nabeel Abu-Shriha
ANSAD Focal Point

CSOs

CSOs Contribution to the global development community's efforts in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Five years ago the world's leaders, gathered at the UN headquarters for the UN Millennium Summit, adopted the UN Millennium Declaration by agreeing to a set of eight challenging development goals to be achieved by 2015: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; Achieve universal primary education; Promote gender equality and empower women; Reduce child mortality; Improve maternal health; Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; Ensure environmental sustainability; and develop Global partnership for development.

Since the Millennium Declaration, many Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) across the globe have been mobilizing their constituencies to participate and contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. Some of these CSOs have even taken a step further by acting as campaign coordinators of the MDGs in their respective regions. In the future issues of the Newsletter we will bring you some of the experiences of these CSOs. Among these CSOs is the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), which in July last year convened a consultation symposium on "**Regional NGO Consultation: Mainstreaming the MDGs in Asia**". Over 30 members and partners of ANGOC participated in the workshop to

discuss how CSOs can participate and contribute in the attainment of the MDGs in the Asia Pacific region. The workshop was also attended by representatives from various agencies of the United Nations, Asian Development Bank (ADB), and UN MDGs Campaign Unit in Asia. To read the complete conference report click here:
http://www.egfar.org/tools/pdf/MDG_Report.pdf.

N.A.

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