

Global Forum on Agricultural Research

REPORT PRESENTED TO THE CGIAR AT ICW98

October 30, 1998

Since the last GFAR meetings held in conjunction with MTM in Brasilia, significant progress has been made concerning the representativeness of the different constituencies, the formulation of the programme of work and budget and the functioning of both Secretariats of GFAR. A brief report is presented here on each of these aspects. As the CGIAR External Review Panel has made a specific recommendation on GFAR, the Steering Committee (GF-SC) also decided to share with the CGIAR its preliminary response on the System Review Report.

GFAR Constituencies

In its first meeting in May 1997, the GFAR decided on the establishment of a steering committee composed of 13 members, requesting each to widely consult with its constituencies for appropriate representativeness and legitimacy being the key to the success of the initiative. It was also decided to allow 3 years to work out such a mechanism and to revisit the composition and organization of GFAR during the following GFAR meeting, now scheduled for May 2000. A good progress in this context has been made.

- 1 The 4 developing countries representatives nominated by the Regional Fora are working hard to increase the participation of other NARS and stakeholders in their fora. Since GFAR was launched, two new regional fora were established : one for Latin America and Caribbean and the other for sub-Saharan Africa, complementing the already existing fora for the Asia-Pacific and West Asia North Africa regions. The NARS' members of the GFAR-SC are :
Dr. R.S. Paroda (A-P); Dr. M. Houssou (SSA); Dr. J. Kondo (LAC); and Dr. M. Roozitalab (WANA) whereas Central and Eastern European and Central Asian and Caucasus (CEE / CAC) countries have still to decide as to how they want to be represented in the GF-SC.
- 1 Amongst the 3 groups of ARIs, the European group has initiated national and regional consultations and has nominated its representative, Mr. H. Rouille d'Orfeuil, who has also been elected as vice-Chairman of the GF-SC. The first European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development is scheduled for early 1999. The North American ARIs are currently represented by Dr. R. Coffman, USA, and they have already initiated wider consultations. The Australasian ARIs are represented by Dr. N. Maeno from Japan.
- 2 The CGIAR CDC has decided to nominate Dr. S. Bie, Director General of ISNAR, to represent them on the GF-SC.
- 3 The CGIAR Private Sector Committee, initially represented by its Chair, has recently identified Ms. Dr. C. Madere to represent them on GF-SC and she has already started wider consultations with other major private companies.
- 4 The CGIAR NGO Committee, initially represented by its Chair, has now nominated Mr. J.-M. von der Weid to serve on the GF-SC.
- 5 In its last meeting, the GF-SC has welcomed the representation of the Farmers' Organizations by the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) which was represented for the first time by Mr. R. Pertev.
- 6 The donor community is represented by Dr. A. Slama, IFAD, who is also the Chairman of the GFAR Support Group.

GFAR Programme of Work

The Programme of Work and Budget presented in Brasilia has been revised to clearly delineate the respective responsibilities and priority activities of the two secretariats. The five priority areas agreed upon in Brasilia remain :

- 1 Information and communication technologies
- 2 Strengthening the Regional Fora and NARS sub-regional groupings
- 3 Genetic Resource management, biotechnology and intellectual property rights
- 4 Natural Resource management and agro-ecology
- 5 International cooperation for agricultural research on commodities and research agenda outside the CGIAR mandate

Priority has been assigned to the GF-SC Secretariat to prepare a strategic agenda for the meeting GFAR 2000 and to pursue the development of EGFAR, the Electronic Global Forum on Agricultural Research. In this respect, the GF-SC has recommended the organization in early 1999 of a consultation between the main institutions and actors involved in global information management systems. Such a meeting may also assist the CGIAR in addressing recommendation 6 of the CGIAR External Review Panel on the development of "an effective Global Knowledge System for Food Security".

The priority assigned to the NARS Secretariat is the strengthening of the Regional Fora and NARS Sub-regional groupings through : i) assistance to CEE/CAC countries to organize themselves in order to participate effectively in GFAR; ii) inter-and intra-regional participation and information exchanges; iii) regional and sub-regional priority and programme formulation; iv) sharing successful experiences in building NARS, in developing partnerships, and in developing and transferring research technologies. The second priority assigned to the NARS Secretariat is to assist the regional fora, the sub-regional groupings and the NARS in improving their communications and information systems.

GFAR Budget

The Programme of Work and Budget for 1998-99 and 1999-2000 was also presented to and endorsed by the GFAR Support Group chaired by Dr. A. Slama from IFAD which met on Tuesday, 27 October 1998. During this meeting, indications of new pledges have been expressed and excellent suggestions made for broadening the participation and contribution of the international community to GFAR activities. The present pledges are quite encouraging and future assurances would ensure implementation of some key activities during the next two years. However, more support would be envisaged for the successful organization of GFAR 2000 and the support to Regional Fora.

GFAR Secretariats

Since Brasilia, thanks to the World Bank, FAO, ISNAR and the members of the GFAR Support Group led by IFAD, both the GF-SC Secretariat and the NARS Secretariat are now operational. With the appointment of Dr. Fernando Chaparro as the first NARS Executive Secretary as of 24 October 1998, the NARS Secretariat will be able to immediately launch concrete actions to strengthen the NARS regional fora and sub-regional groupings.

The main task of the GF-SC Secretariat is now to prepare the meeting "GFAR 2000". The GF-SC has decided to establish a small working group to advise on the technical programme and other logistics. A representative of Germany, the host country for GFAR 2000, is a member of this working group. The provisional theme identified for GFAR 2000 is : "New

research partnerships in the context of globalization”. It was also decided that the different GFAR constituencies will be widely consulted in order to validate the identified theme and to indicate what are their expectations of the meeting and the results and lessons, within the 5 GFAR priority areas, that they would like to share, based on their regional deliberations, during GFAR 2000.

Reports to the CGIAR MTM 99 will be more action-oriented and will present preliminary results which will hopefully encourage the international community to increase its moral, scientific and financial support to this initiative.

GFAR’s response on the CGIAR External Review Report

The GFAR wishes to acknowledge the role the CGIAR has played in strengthening the international partnerships in agricultural research (including forestry and fisheries), and also the key role played in the formation of GFAR.

The role of GFAR goes beyond the mandate of the CGIAR, and hence GFAR would appreciate the support that CGIAR may give for the convening of a global forum on agricultural research every three years.

GFAR also appreciates the reference made (para 15.7 and recommendation 20) to GFAR’s role in strengthening the involvement of NARS in the decision-making process of the CGIAR itself, and confirms its willingness to do so. The GFAR can also play a facilitating role in the implementation of many of the System Review recommendations, through the Regional and sub-Regional fora and through the activities it is carrying out in promoting partnerships and capacity-building efforts. GFAR believes that the new linkages being built will benefit both the NARS and their regional and sub-regional organizations, and the CGIAR.

Conclusion

The GFAR Steering Committee and its Chairman are very pleased to note the increasing interest and support of the members of the CGIAR into this new initiative. They wish to reaffirm their faith and willingness to work very closely with the CGIAR in developing the new partnerships which would assist the CGIAR in fulfilling its new mission statement aiming to contribute to food security, poverty eradication and conservation of natural resources since they are also the precise goals of GFAR.

We would also like to express our appreciation of the fact that now the GF-SC and NARS-SC Secretariats have a seat in the table of CGIAR meetings.

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GF-SC & NARS-SC