

ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
INSTITUTIONS IN THE NEAR EAST
AND NORTH AFRICA
(AARINENA)

Report of the
Seventh General Conference of
AARINENA

Beirut, Lebanon
22-23 March 2000

Organized in Collaboration with:

Lebanon Agricultural Research Institution
Ministry of Agriculture, Lebanon

International Center for Agricultural Research
in Dry Areas (ICARDA)

International Service for National Agricultural
Research (ISNAR)

Food and Agriculture Organization of
the United Nations (FAO)

Seventh General Conference of AARINENA 22-23 March 2000, Beirut-Lebanon

SUMMARY

The main decisions and recommendations made by the 7th General Conference of AARINENA are as follows:

A) AARINENA programme of work for 2000/2001

1. Co-operate with FAO-SDRR to valorize the information included in the "AARINENA/FAO/ICARDA/CIHEAM Country Profiles and NARS Review Analysis" and initiate the process of developing a NARS Directory for the WANA region.

2. Priority setting to be updated for all member countries and submitted to AARINENA secretariat for distribution/publication.

3. Establishment of a regional Network for Date-palm in the AARINENA region in co-operation with FAO-RNE

4. Preparation of new sub-regional co-operative projects for each sub-region following the Maghreb/Mashreq sub-region Model; enhance efforts for securing funds/donors for the implementation of projects already prepared.

-In close co-operation with ICARDA, IWMI and others, AARINENA lead NARS to proceed with the preparation of a regional project that has common interest and priority for the whole region. Such as "Efficient use of Water".

The country contact persons to submit to the Secretariat institutions, contact persons, project development status for each of the project proposals outlined in "AARINENA in 2000 and Beyond: A Framework for Action (2000-2005)

5. Completion and continuous updating of AARINENA home page on the Internet that is now hosted by the Web site of ARI, Cyprus. Linkage of AARINENA's home page with NARS, NGOs, Universities and International Organizations operating in the region, as well as with ISNAR, NARS-SEC of GF. (and to prepare the ground for an efficient information network between research institutions in the various sub-regions in collaboration with FAO). The input of all NARS by providing additional information is of great importance.

6. Work out ways/enhance efforts for strengthening of research partnerships with other regions like Europe (EFAD), CAC and others; connect sites in Europe with AARINENA sub regions (organise training programmes and conferences/ workshops on topics of common interest). Establish working groups composed of scientists from NARS of AARINENA and European regions for formulating projects proposals within the priorities set up by European Union (i.e. oil seeds, fruits & vegetables, cotton).

7. Proceed with the preparation of successful "Case studies" of successful research partnerships and innovative research partnerships for presentation at Global-2000 meeting in Dresden, Germany.

- Wheat Leaf and Stem Rusts Network in the Nile Valley and Red Sea Region (Salah Sherif, ARC Egypt or Moustafa Malki, ITGC Algeria).
- Development of integrated crop/livestock systems in the low rainfall areas of the Mashreq and Maghreb regions (Moustafa Malki, ITGC Algeria).
- Regional network on research and development of date palm (FAO/NARS-Secretariat).

-POSTERS

- ❖ Hessian Fly Management in North Africa-WANA NARSs/ICARDA/CIMMYT
- ❖ Use of Feed Blocks in West Asia and North Africa_WANA/NARSs/ICARDA/IFRI
- ❖ On-Farm Water Husbandry Network for West Asia and North Africa-NARSs/ICARDA

8. Development of a West Asia and North Africa (WANA) Agricultural Information System (WAIS) (NARS-Secretariat/FAO-SDR).

9. Examine the possibilities and participate in the initiatives for the establishment of a Cotton Network based on Commodity Approach with the co-operation of APARI, AARINENA and CAC associations.

10. AARINENA in co-operation with ISNAR, FAO, ICARDA and CLAES to organise training workshop on ICT.

B) RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The conference recommended that AARINENA should continue efforts to develop its own capacities for self-reliance to fulfil its objectives and continues to cooperate with CG system and cosponsors.
2. Prepare its mid and long term plans; priority setting is a dynamic process that would benefit from continuous review and refinement.
3. Work towards strengthening information exchange and communication between NARS within the region, and promote interaction and partnership in research within and outside the region.
4. To work through formulating policies and initiating actions to enable the Association to increase its financial support such as seeking interregional collaboration with EU (Mediterranean) Countries. The country contact persons to provide the AARINENA Secretariat addresses of NARS and Research scientists working within the lines of project proposals outlined in Framework for Action (2000-2005) report, and those that have been announced by EC (fruits and vegetables: Date palm, citrus; oil seeds: olives, cotton: cotton) for funding. Following the identification of Researchers from regional NARS and Europe, to formulate working groups for project proposal(s) preparation and submission to EC for funding.

5. The participants emphasized the need for a stronger, self-dependent Association in order to establish formal mechanisms of consultation at sub regional level through e-mail services, regular meetings, exchange of expertise and collaboration among researchers within the Region as well as with other international centres.

6. Although AARINENA is determined to keep its administrative structure and cost to the bare minimum, the need to appoint a full-time Executive Secretary and, when resources allow, a full-time Information and Documentation Officer was identified. Therefore, the new Executive Committee to identify means to fulfil these needs.
The conference recommended that Executive secretary of AARINENA be connected with president office.

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

Preamble:

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with the International Centre of Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) sponsored the seventh General Conference of the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (AARINENA), which was held at the Savoy Hotel, Beirut, Lebanon from 22 to 23 March 2000, at the kind invitation of the Government Lebanon.
2. Representatives from 13 member countries, and 10 regional and international organisations (Appendix I) attended the conference.

Opening of the Conference:

3. The conference was inaugurated by Dr. Moustafa Yaghi, Chairman of Board of Directors of LARI, Representing H.E. The Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Lebanon Mr. Suleiman Franjeh, who warmly welcomed the participants. Statements of FAO ADG/Regional Representative for the Near East, ICARDA Director General, ISNAR Director General and AARINENA president were also presented at the opening session.

Election of the Chairman, Rapporteur and Nomination Officer of the Conference:

4. The Conference unanimously elected the following officers:

-Dr. Moustafa Yaghi, Chairman of Board of Directors of Lebanon Agricultural Research Institutions, Ministry of Agriculture (Lebanon), as chairman.

-Dr. M. Hadjipanayiotou, Senior Agricultural Research Officer, Agricultural Research Institute (Cyprus), as Rapporteur.

-Dr. George Orphanides, Chief Agricultural Research Officer (Cyprus), as Nomination Officer.

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable:

5. The conference modified the provisional agenda and timetable, which then was adopted. (Appendix II).

Key Note Address:

6. AARINENA in 2000 and Beyond: A Framework for Action (2000-2005)

Dr. Mohammed Zehni, AARINENA Consultant, delivered the keynote address focusing on the main thrust of the Framework for Action to translate the Strategy of the Association into concrete activities in accordance with its mission statement and goals. It was underlined that this will be realised through the revitalisation of the Association's capacities and by bringing greater efficiency and continuity in its operations. The focus of the Framework being two-pronged:

First, to build the organisational and technical capacities of the Association on a more sustainable basis, thus enabling the Association for the fulfilment of its role as catalyst, facilitator, forum and keeper and provider of basic information data.

Second, to identify and mobilise support for national and regional priority research issues and problems, leaving the actual execution of research projects and networks to the national agricultural research institutions and the collaborating

regional and international research and development organisations.

Regional Network for Date-Palm in the Near East and North Africa

Based on the conclusions and recommendations of the “Regional Workshop on Date-palm Post-harvest Processing Technology and the “Consultation Meeting on Establishment of Date-palm Network held (11-14 October 1999) in Iran, AARINENA with the support of FAO hired a consultant (Dr. Wajih N. Sawaya) who prepared and presented at the 7th General Conference a draft proposal for the “Establishment of a Regional Network for Date-palm in the Near East and North Africa”. The consultant will prepare a final document taking into consideration the inputs from the participants and present at GFAR 2000 in Dresden, Germany the paper “Regional network on research and development of date palm”. A project proposal will be prepared by the consultant and distributed to countries of the region and donor agencies.

Information Strategy for the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) Region

As a result of discussions between AARINENA, FAO and the NARS Secretariat of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), AARINENA called an expert consultation (20-21 March 2000, preceding the 7th General Conference) involving representatives of the five WANA sub-regions as well as the main regional and international institutions (ACSAD, AOAD, CIHEAM, ICARDA, IPGRI-CWANA, ISNAR, FAO) active in agricultural research for development (ARD) in the WANA region in order to launch the process of formulating a WANA Agricultural Information System (WAIS).

With the support of NARS-SEC of GFAR and FAO/SDR, AARINENA hired a consultant (Dr. Ahmed Rafea) who prepared a report that was presented at the ICT consultation meeting (20-21 March 2000) and:

1. Reviewed all recent publications of the NARS Secretariat of the CFAR on who will assist AARINENA to formulate a WANA Agricultural Information System

2. Identified constraints which could prevent the implementation of an effective, efficient and sustainable information system in WANA and to brainstorm on possible ways and means to alleviate them.

3. Discussed a draft WANA Agricultural Information Strategy and a project proposal for the establishment of a WAIS. The AARINENA Secretariat will prepare (these two documents with the assistance of the consultant).

The consultant will prepare its final report after taking into consideration the inputs/comments of the sub-regional ICT experts and of ICT experts from regional and international organisations involved in research and development in the region. The consultant will also prepare a project proposal for the development of a WANA Agricultural Information System (WAIS).

The program of the consultation and the list of participants are in Appendices IV and V, respectively.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

8. Dr. Ibrahim Hamdan, Senior Officer FAO_RNE, the organisation operating AARINENA's Trust Fund, presented the financial statement from 1 May 1998 to March 2000. Seventeen member countries and four Regional and International Organizations paid their membership fees. Grants were received from Four International Organizations. (Appendix III).

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

9. The General Conference unanimously amended the two articles of the constitution as per article XV of the constitution and proposed by the Executive Committee as follows:

1) Article III to add the following two new objectives:

- Strengthen national agricultural research capacities for providing timely and necessary data and information to the policy makers;
- Assist in the mobilization of financial and other forms of support to all efforts aiming at strengthening agricultural research and technology development in the Region.

2) Article VIII item 5 for allowing the immediate re-election of the President and Vice President for only one more term for the same office.

The amended Article VII item 5 should read:

The General Conference shall elect, in the conditions mentioned in Article IX, paragraph 1, the five members of the Executive Committee. It will also elect, among the members of the Executive Committee, a President and a Vice-President who shall act, at the same time, as President and Vice-President of the General Conference and of the Executive Committee. The term of office of the President and Vice-President will be of two years. They will be eligible for immediate re-election for only one more term for the same office.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

10. The Executive Secretary presented a detailed account of his duties and emphasized that he had been undertaking these duties without any additional payment for the past two years. He added that since the mentioned duties increased and are expected to continue to increase significantly, they absorbed most of his regular working time. He thus suggested a contribution of US\$10,000 to cover partially the cost of his services beyond the regular working time but the General Conference did not accept this suggestion.

Cyprus has been hosting the Seat of AARINENA since 1989, and as the representative of Cyprus emphasized **“Cyprus is willing and determined to continue to host the Seat of the Association”**. The FAO Near East Regional Office was undertaking the duties of the Executive Secretary until 1998, when they were undertaken by the Agricultural Research Institute of Cyprus.

According to its Constitution (Article 1), AARINENA “shall have its seat at the Agricultural Research Institute (ARI) in Nicosia, Cyprus”. The Agreement for the establishment of this seat was signed in 1989 and is still in force. Only the General Conference shall be empowered to transfer the seat and no such a decision has been taken yet. It was, however, proposed to the newly elected President of the Association, and he accepted, to appoint a Technical Officer from Lebanon who

would undertake the duties of the Executive Secretary **free of Charge.**

ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF AARINENA

11. The Conference elected, by secret ballot, the following officers representing the five sub-regions, to serve as the seventh Executive Committee of AARINENA:

- Dr. Mustafa K. Yaghi, (Al-Mashreq), President
- Dr. Y. Al-Shayji, (Arabian Peninsula), Vice President
- Dr. Mohamed Roozitalab, (West and Central Asia), member
- Dr. I. Muharram, (Nile Valley and Red Sea), member
- Dr. A. Scicluna-Spiteri, (Maghreb), member

DATE OF THE EIGHTH GENERAL CONFERENCE:

12. The General Conference has decided that the 8th AARINENA General Conference will be held in Jordan in April 2002. Representative of Jordan was requested to send an official invitation to the president of the association.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSURE OF THE CONFERENCE:

13. The Rapporteur read the programme of work for the period 2000-2001; then, the Conference adopted its report, and came to a close on Thursday 23, March 2000.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE 7TH GENERAL CONFERENCE HELD IN BEIRUT (FROM 22 TO 23 MARCH 2000)

MEMBER COUNTRIES

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APPENDIX II

Program of the 7th General Conference of AARINENA
22-23 March 2000, Beirut, Lebanon

Monday & Tuesday, 20 & 21 March 1999

ICT EXPERT CONSULTATION

Wednesday 22, March 1999

08:30 - 09:00 Registration

Opening Session

09:00 - 10:15

- Statement by the President of AARINENA
- Statement by the Director General of ISNAR
- Statement by the Director General of ICARDA
- Statement by FAO ADG/Regional Representative
- Statement by H.E. the Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Lebanon.

10:15 - 10:45 Reception

10:45 - 11:00
Nomination

- Election of the Chairman, Rapporteur and Officer
- Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

11:00 - 11:40 - President Report
Dr. M. Roozitalab

11:40 - 12:10 -AARINENA in 2000 and Beyond: A Framework for Action (2000-2005)
M. Zehni

12:10 - 12:30 -Regional Network on Date Palm
Dr. W. Sawaya

12:30 - 12:55 - ICT Strategy For WANA
Dr. Ahmed Rafea

12:55-14:00 -Lunch Break

14:00-14:25 - GFAR-2000
Dr. Fernando Chapparo

14:25- 14:50 - Development of Effective Collaboration between Europe & AARINENA

EIARD Representative

Sub-Regional Activities

14:50 - 15:05 1) Arabian Peninsula Sub-Region, Dr. Y. Al-Shayji

15:05 - 15:20 2) Mashreq Sub-Region, Dr. C. Hilan

15:20 - 15:35 3) Maghreb Sub-Region, Dr. F. Taher

15:35 - 16:50 4) Nile Valley & Red Sea Sub-Region, Dr. I. Muharram

15:50 - 16:05 5) West and Central Asian Sub-Region, Dr. M. Roozitalab

16:05 - 16:15 Coffee Break

16:15 - 17:15 Discussion on Regional Activities

17:15- 18:15 AARINENA Programme of Work for 2000/2001
AARINENA Secretary

18:15 - 19:15 General Discussion

Thursday, 23 March 2000

08:00 - 08:30 -Administrative/Secretarial Matters,
Dr. M. Hadjipanayiotou, AARINENA

08:30 - 09:00 - Financial Matters,
Dr. I.Y. Hamdan, FAO/RNE

09:00 - 09:30 - Constitutional Amendments
FAO Legal Officer

09:30 - 10:00 Coffee Break

10:00 - 11:00 - Election of the President and Executive Committee
- Date & Place of the 8th General Conference

11:00 - 11:30 - Adoption of the Report
- Closure

11:30 - 17:30 - Field Trip and Lunch in Baalbak

17:30 - 18:30 - New Executive Committee Meeting

APPENDIX III

**ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS
IN THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

(AARINENA)

**STATEMENT OF REVENUE, EXPENSES
AND FUND BALANCE
FOR THE PERIOD 1 MAY, 1998 TO March 2000**

REVENUE

Subscriptions:

Member Countries (Note 2)	\$61,758
Organizations (Note 3)	\$17,921
Grants (Note 4)	\$38,918
Total Revenue	<u>\$118,597</u>

EXPENSES

Travel	\$67,565
Consultants	\$18,303
Contracts	\$11,000
Operating expenses	\$14,346
Other Operating Expenses	\$1,429
Total expenses	<u>\$112,643</u>

Excess of Revenue over Expenses	\$5,954
Fund balance at 1 May 1998	\$81,188
Adjustment for Over Accruals of Expenses in April 1998	\$6,544

FUND BALANCE AT March 2000 **\$93,686**

The accompanying notes are an integral part of this financial statement

**ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS
IN THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
(AARINENA)
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT
FOR THE PERIOD
1 MAY, 1998 TO March 2000**

1. Accounting Policies

This financial statement is prepared, in US Dollars, from the accounting records of RNE. Financial transactions of AARINENA are processed in the accounts of RNE in accordance with the financial rules, regulations and policies of FAO.

Therefore:

- (a) Expenses are recognized in the accounts when, in accordance with RNE policies, there are legal obligations to incur such expenses. However, due to the introduction of the new ORACLE Accounting System, travel expenses are recognized when travel claims are received and processed by FAO.
- (b) Revenues from subscriptions and grants are recorded in the accounts when actually received. Subscriptions and grants due as of the end of the period covered by this financial statement, are not recorded in the accounts.
- (c) The cost of equipment is charged to expense when acquired.

2. Subscriptions Received from Member Countries

	<u>1998-1999-2000</u>	<u>Remark</u>
Cyprus	4,000	
Egypt	2,000	Plus 2000 Payment Author. Received
Iran	2,000	
Iraq	--	
Jordan	4,000	
Kuwait		
- <i>Kisr</i>	3,993	
- <i>PAAF</i>	2,992	
Lebanon		
- <i>MOA-FANAR</i>	7,917	
- <i>LNCSR</i>	1,975	
Libya	4,000	
Malta	2,000	
Morocco	3,978	
Oman	4,999	

Pakistan	--
Palestine	3,955
Sudan	2,982
Syria	4,000
Tunisia	974
UAE	2,000
Yemen	3,993
Total	\$61,758

3. Subscriptions Received from Cosponsors & Organizations

	1998	1999	2000	Remarks
ACSAD	\$2,000	\$2,000		
AOAD		\$3,921	*	* 1000 received not recorded
FAO/RNE	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	
ICARDA	\$2,000	\$2,000		
Total	<u>\$17,921</u>			

4. Grants Received

ICARDA	\$5,109			Support of participants
ISNAR	\$6,809		*	*4000 received not recorded
NARS-Secretariat & FAO SDRR			\$27,000	ICT & Date-Network (80% of 32,000)
Total	<u>\$38,918</u>			

5. Grants Directly Paid by Cosponsors

FAO/RNE	\$11,500	\$4,736	\$9,520	Support of participants & Date Palm Network
ICARDA		\$1,370	\$3,570	Support of participants

APPENDIX IV
Programme of the ICT Consultation Meeting
 Beirut, Lebanon, 20 – 21 March 2000

Monday 20 March 2000	Tuesday 21 March 2000
<p><u>Opening session</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AARINENA Representative - GFAR/NARS-SEC Representative - FAO-RNE Representative <p>Adoption of the agenda</p> <p>A framework for a Global Agricultural R & D Information System (GFAR/NARS-SEC)</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p><i>Coffee break</i></p> <p>ICT: FAO Experience & Lessons Learnt A.AI- a, FAO/RNE</p> <p><u>ICT situation in the WANA Region</u> Presentation + 10' clarification per sub-region)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maghreb Sub-region Nile Valley and Red Sea Sub-Region Mashreq Sub-region Arabian Peninsula Sub-Region <p><i>Lunch break</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> West and Central Asian Sub-Region <p>Presentation (10' each) by regional/ international ons (ACSAD, CIHEAM, FAO, ICARDA, IPGRI)</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p><i>Coffee break</i></p> <p><u>Presentations of a WANA Agricultural Information Strategy</u></p> <p>Presentation of the draft WANA Agricultural Information Strategy</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>End of the day</p>	<p><u>ICT constraints and prospects</u></p> <p>Roundtable on communications</p> <p>Roundtable on information systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Access to scientific information b) Database & Management of Information Systems <p><i>Coffee break</i></p> <p><u>WANA Agricultural Information System</u></p> <p>Roundtable on amendments to the draft Strategy ment</p> <p><i>Lunch break</i></p> <p>Roundtable on the project proposal for the shment of a WAIS</p> <p><i>Coffee break</i></p> <p><u>Conclusions</u></p> <p>Summaries of the different sessions</p> <p>Next Steps</p> <p>End of the consultation</p>

APPENDIX V
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FOR
INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
(ICT) MEETING
BEIRUT 20 TO 21 MARCH 2000

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