

Minutes of the
Executive Committee Meeting
In Malta on 17th - 18th September 2000

AARINENA Executive Committee meeting took place at the University of Malta during the period of 17-18 September, 2000.

Present :

Dr. Youssif Al-Shayji, Vice President of AARINENA.

Prof. Anthony Scicluna Spiteri, member

Dr. Muhamad Roozitalab, member

Dr. Ismail Muharam, member

Dr. Christo hilan, Executive Secretary.

Absent:

Dr. Mustafa Yaghi, President of AARINENA.

Upon their invitation, the meeting was attendant by:

Dr. Ibrahim Hamdan (FAO), as Trust Fund Operating Officer for AARINENA.

Dr. Fernando Chaparro, NARS Secretariat.

Dr. Denis Fadda, FAO Legal Officer.

AARINENA Vice President, Dr. Youssif Al-Shayji chaired the meeting, welcomed the members and apologized for the absence of Dr. Yaghi due to health problems.

He thanked:

the Executive Secretary for fulfilling all secretarial activities in a professional way.

Dr Ibrahim Hamdan for his help in operating the trust fund and providing assistance to the Secretariat.

Dr. Fernando Chaparro for his efforts in supporting AARINENA.

Mr. Denis Fadda for the preparation of the rules and procedures.

Finally, Prof. Anthony Spiteri for hosting this meeting and for his generous and warm welcome to all participants.

The agenda of the meeting was adopted with minor modifications as follows:

Rules and Regulations.

Amendments of AARINENA Constitution.

Progress Report and Date Palm Network Project.

Operationalization of AARINENA and Partnership with EIARD.

Strengthening of the Secretariat.

Financial Statement and AARINENA Budget for the years 2001 - 2002.

The recommendations and Future Work Plan.

Dr. Denis Fadda, FAO legal officer, highlighted the urgent need for the establishment of the rules and procedures for the Association and the amendments of specific issues regarding its constitution. He went through every single rule that was distributed to all participants and discussed their comments. A final corrected draft would be distributed to all members for final comments, as soon as it is received from the legal officer.

All the participants discussed the amendments to the AARINENA constitution.

Several suggestions have been proposed:

Article I Parag. 4:

The General Conference shall decide on the place of the association seat.

Article II Parag. 1:

a- The sentence should read ... Member countries shall cover the territories..., instead of ... Member countries cover ...

b- And the following countries should be omitted Tajikistan, Tukmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgystan and Kazakhstan.

- Article VIII Parag. 2:

The sentence should read ... Budget proposed ..., instead of ... Budget prepared...

Parag 4:

We should add ... and to the associated members such observers are ...

Article IX Parag. 1:

The sentence should read ... they shall be eligible for..., instead of ...they shall not be eligible for....

Omit -for more than two terms-.

Parag. 2:

The sentence should read ...It shall propose the budget ..., instead of ...It shall prepare the budget...

Parag. 3:

The sentence should read... Candidature for office..., instead of ... Nomination for office...

Article XI Parag. 1:

The Executive Secretary of the Association shall be appointed by the General Conference on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

All the above-proposed amendments have to be discussed, in order to be approved by the General Conference.

The Executive Secretary presented his progress report with the following comments:

It has been confirmed that the Secretariat of the Association should be a full time job and have a stable budget and location in order to fulfil all required activities.

Calling for an APO by the FAO/RNE was highly appreciated. The request has been processed by ADG/RR, RNE and sent to FAO/TCDM and Dr. Chaparro was asked to follow it up.

The effort of Dr. Miltos in preparing the Newsletter was highly appreciated, but some copies were not sent yet. For example, Dr. I. Muharram has not received his copies.

Regarding AARINENA Website, a proposal and invoice was presented and approved. But still waiting for a second proposal from Yemen (Dr. I. Muharram) to decide on the best offer (Quality and Price).

Concerning Dr. F. Chaparro's mail regarding the establishment of International fund for the support of Genebanks, AARINENA members showed great interest in this issue. It was highly recommended to help all AARINENA countries to establish their own genebanks and to contribute to the proposed world genebank information.

The President, Dr. M. Yaghi and Dr. M. Roozitalab shall represent AARINENA in ICW00 meeting to be held in Washington DC (20-27 October 2000) for both GFAR and CGIAR. Their participation is supported by GFAR. A paper on AARINENA activities during last 6 months will be presented by the President.

The Integrated Feed Project prepared by AARINENA was received. Many International Organizations showed interest to participate but they did not propose funding.

RAIS/WANA Workshop organized by AARINENA/FAO is considered of high importance for the establishment of focal points in each country to assure communication and transfer of agricultural information.

The contribution of AARINENA and the participation of its members in the International Conference on Biotechnology Application (Kuwait 9-11 April 2001) were highly approved. It was agreed to have the next Executive Committee meeting in Kuwait, on the next day after the Conference (12th April 2001).

The Date Palm Network Project:

It has been fully discussed in all the details and activities performed. All the necessary contacts with International Organizations have been made, seeking their partnership and financial support. Once the project is funded, the secretariat of the network would be established after receiving official requests for hosting. The only request was received from Iran to host the Secretariat of the Date Palm Network.

Regarding Dr. Kesseba's report, presented by Dr. F. Chaparro but not received yet, he advised to contact ACSAD to provide focal points addresses for its Network Project. Contacts have been done but no answers from ACSAD were

received. The Executive secretary was disappointed because he expected from Dr. Kesseba constructive advises and not criticism on secretarial work. Dr. Ismail Muharram asked to include the participation of Yemen institutions and researchers in Date Palm Network. It was recommended to contact CIRAD (Centre International pour la Recherche Agricole et le Development) as they have shown interest in this project. Also to contact Mr. Michel de Nuce (President of Agropolis) to provide addresses to renew contacts with funding agencies.

The Trust Fund Operating Officer, Dr. I. Hamdan, addressed two issues:
Strengthening of the Secretariat:

Upon his retirement at the end of September, he stated that until a new Regional Officer for Agro-Industries & Technology is appointed, FAO/RNE has arranged that MSU Chief, Mr. A. Tabet will process the day to day AARINENA requests to ensure smooth operation of AARINENA activities and designated the Secretary Mrs. Naira Elshourbagy to keep the e-mail system in operation and the files belonging to AARINENA in its place for the use of the new Regional Officer.

A call for an APO has been already done by FAO to assist AARINENA Secretariat. He also stated that FAO office in Lebanon will support the Secretariat.

Dr. I. Hamdan is willing to help AARINENA at any time, as much as he can, even during his leave.

Financial Status:

Management report on the financial status of AARINENA for the period from 1st May 1998 to 14th September 2000 was presented showing a fund balance of 95000 US \$.

The report also showed member countries for the years 1999-2000, the paid and non-paid countries and International Organizations.

The Executive secretary has done all contacts with these countries asking for their payment.

Iraq request to postpone their membership fees payment until after the embargo was denied.

Upon the request of Oman, the audited final accounts of AARINENA for the year 1999 and the general budget of the association were sent.

AARINENA budget for the years 2001-2002 was prepared jointly with the Executive Secretary of AARINENA, presented and agreed on by all members of the Executive Committee.

Dr. Fernando Chaparro presented slides on the Global Forum on Agricultural research showing all activities in the context of globalization.

He commented Dr. A. Kesseba's report concerning AARINENA activities, stating that the association should improve contacts among NARS of member countries. For the time being, it is more worldwide known among International Organizations than on the basis of NARS countries. In order to strengthen these contacts, the Secretariat of the association should be a full time job with a stable budget. We need to establish funding strategy and mobilize funds from regional donors. Concerning Date Palm initiative, he proposed to renew contacts as soon possible to establish a funding mechanism for this Network project.

He urged NARS of member countries to work together to contribute to the projects and complement each other work before seeking the financial support of Regional or International Organizations.

He stressed on the importance of the Agricultural Information System. It is essential for the transfer of data and information.

Conclusions and recommendations:

The efforts of Dr. I. Hamdan were greatly appreciated. All the members expressed their thanks and gratitude to him as he passed through stages of being a secretary, trust fund Operator and ensuring the follow-up of all AARINENA activities.

All members thanked Dr. D. Fadda for his excellent work in preparing rules, procedures and amendments of the constitution, which are going to be published later.

They also thanked Dr. F. Chaparro for his job in strengthening AARINENA activities.

The Executive secretary was thanked for his god work and effort.

It was highly recommended that contacts should be done with all member countries seeking their desire to host Date Palm Network secretariat and the Secretariat of the Association.

It was highly recommended that the Secretariat should be a full time job with a stable location and budget to fulfil all necessary activities, especially strengthening the contacts among NARS countries.

It was also recommended to ask NARS to contribute for the workshops organized by AARINENA.

All members wished the President a quick recovery.