## Executive Committee

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<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Dr. Adil Abdelrahim</td>
<td>(Sudan)</td>
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<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Dr. Faouzi Bekkaoui</td>
<td>(Morocco)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representative of West and Central Asian Sub-Region</td>
<td>Dr. Fadila Salameen</td>
<td>(Kuwait)</td>
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<td>Members</td>
<td>Dr. Faouzi Bekkaoui</td>
<td>(Morocco)</td>
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<td>Dr. Nizar Haddad</td>
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<td>Dr. Abdullah Alolofi</td>
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<td>Dr. Hassan Machlab</td>
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<td>Miss. Seta Tutingun</td>
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<td>To be nominated</td>
<td>(CSOs)</td>
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<td>Dr. Rida A. Shibli</td>
<td>(AARINENA)</td>
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## Editorial Committee

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<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Secretary</td>
<td>Dr. Rida A. Shibli</td>
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Introduction

The Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East & North Africa (AARINENA) had in store many plans to execute in the year 2021. Unfortunately, most of the activities were postponed due to COVID-19. So, we resorted to working remotely and hosted many workshops, training courses, webinars and other meetings online. Also, we forwarded many activities, webinars...etc to our members. After this crisis, we will revert to the regularly planned schedule of activities and meetings.

Participation in Webinar on Regional Consultation on Forgotten Foods in Asia-Pacific - Developing a Regional Manifesto, May 28, 2021

AARINENA participated in a Webinar on Regional Consultation on Forgotten Foods in Asia-Pacific - Developing a Regional Manifesto, on May 28, 2021

This is webinar is in partnership between the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), the Global Forum of Agricultural Research (GFAR), Alliance Bioversity - CIAT, Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), Barli Development Institute for Rural Women (BDIRW) and International Crop Research Institute for Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT) on Regional Consultation on Forgotten Foods in Asia-Pacific - Developing a Regional Manifesto on May 28th, through the Zoom platform.
AARINENA’s Webinar for the Date Palm Network’s Zoom Meeting, May 27, 2021

AARINENA arranged a Webinar for the Date Palm Networks which was held virtually on via Zoom, May 27, 2021.

Decisions of the meeting: Dr. Mohamed Kamal Abbas, Head of Date Palm Department at ARC-Egypt became the coordinator of AARINENA - Date Palm Network.

Also, Dr. Shibli informed that AARINENA signed a Letter of Agreement with FAO to establish the Date Palm Platform and this will commence its mandate in the coming weeks.

Virtual Meeting with Dr. Atef Swelem – OINRD to communicate regarding the Date Palm and IP Concept note, May 26, 2021

Dr. Shibli had a meeting with Dr. Atef Swelem – OINRD communicated regarding the Letter of Agreement with FAO for the establishment and Operation the Innovation Platform for the Date Palm Integrated Production System in the NENA Region (DIP_NENA), on May 26, 2021.

AARINENA’s Webinar for the Biotechnology, Olive and Date Palm Networks, May 24, 2021

AARINENA arranged for a Webinar for Biotechnology, Olive and Date Palm Networks, virtually via Zoom for all members, on May 24, 2021. This important session moderated by Dr. Henda Al-Mahmoudi, the coordinator of AARINENA’s Biotechnology Network, was repeated for the second time for sharing the experiences of Dr. Saher Al-Bakir lecture’s “The Role of ACSAD in Spreading Olive Cultivation”, and Dr. Ghassan Abdullah lecture’s “Tissue Propagation of Date Palm” both from the Arab Center for the Studies of
Arid Zones and Drylands (ACSAD) organization, in addition to the important experience of Dr. Ahmad ELBITAR lecture’s “Micropropagation via nodal explants of ancient local olive ecotypes (Olea europaea L.) in Lebanon” from Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute (LARI). This meeting involved useful discussions of attendees from different members of AARINENA from the North Africa and Near East (NENA) region.

Zamzam University of Science and Technology joined AARINENA as new member May 6, 2021
Dr. MOHAMUD M. HASSAN (Harbi), Deputy Rector at Zamzam University of Science and Technology, Mogadishu - Somalia, joined AARINENA as new member, May 6, 2021

Participation in Webinar over HLT session on ‘Innovation in Higher Education, Leadership Challenges’, April 15, 2021
Dr. Shibli participated in Webinar over HLT session on ‘Innovation in Higher Education, Leadership Challenges’, that was held virtually on April 15, 2021.

AARINENA’s Webinar for the Biotechnology, Olive and Date Palm Networks, April 11, 2021
AARINENA arranged a Webinar for Biotechnology, Olive and Date Palm Networks, virtually via Zoom platform for all members, on April 11, 2021. This important session moderated by Dr. Henda Al-Mahmoudi, the coordinator of AARINENA’s Biotechnology Network, was held for the first time for sharing the experiences of Dr. Saher Al-Bakir lecture’s “The Role of ACSAD in Spreading Olive Cultivation”, and Dr. Ghassan Abdullah lecture’s “Tissue Propagation of Date Palm” both from the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Drylands (ACSAD) organization. This meeting involved useful
discussions of attendees from different members of AARINENA from the North Africa and Near East (NENA) region.

**Participation in Agro-Mach MENA during 07-08 April 2021**
Participation in Agro-Mach MENA during 07-08 April 2021.

Agro-Mach MENA India's leading and experienced manufacturers in the field of food processing machinery. They offer a complete turnkey solution from conceptualization to execution. They have a very dedicated and well-qualified team whose only aim is to give 100% satisfaction to their customers by providing value for the money and the investment. Dr. Shibli gave a presentation titled “Bolstering Economic Growth in the MENA Region through Agricultural Innovation”, during 07-08 April 2021.

**Participation in ACSAD’s seventh conference for the development of scientific research and agricultural extension "Development of date palm cultivation in the Arab region" 7-8 / April 2021**
Dr. Shibli participated in ACSAD’s seventh conference for the development of scientific research and agricultural extension entitled "Development of date palm cultivation in the Arab region" via video conference technology, 7-8 / April 2021.

**AARINENA’s Webinar for the Olive Network, April 7, 2021**
AARINENA arranged the Webinar for the Olive Network, virtually on the zoom platform for all members, about the "Genetic improvement and olive resources in Morocco, main achievements" presented by Eng. Lhassane Sikaoui, and this session was moderated by Dr. Salam Ayoub, the coordinator of AARINENA’s Olive Network, on April 7, 2021.
**Participation in the IAS-COMSTECH Biodiversity Conference, virtually on April 1, 2021**
Dr. Shibli participated in the IAS-COMSTECH Biodiversity Conference, which was held on 1 April 2021; under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince El-Hassan Bin Talal, Founding Patron of the Islamic World Academy of Sciences (IAS).

The conference videos can be found on IAS’s YouTube Channel

https://www.youtube.com/user/TheIASworld/videos

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**Participation in Meeting on “High-level dialogue - Sharing experiences between Asia, Africa and the Near East”: “Harnessing local agriculture production system for healthy diets” virtually on 31 March 2021**
Dr. Shibli participated in the Meeting on High-level dialogue - Sharing experiences between Asia, Africa and the Near East: “Harnessing local agriculture production system for healthy diets” 31 March 2021, organized by FAORNE jointly with FAORAF and FAORAP.

The meeting inaugurated by FAO Director-General and had eminent speakers, high level officials, members of a High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE), the Chair of Committee on World Food Security (CFS), advisory committee members and vice-chair of action tracks of UN Food System Summit 2021. The meeting was moderated by FAO Chief Scientist and FAO Chief Economist.

The meeting took place virtually on 31 March, 2021.
Participation in Three-Day EJP SOIL Science Days event, on 29, 30 and 31 March

Dr. Shibli participated in Turkish important scientific days of the EJP SOIL Science Days event, during 29, 30 and 31 March, 2021!

The 1st Annual Science Days of the EJP SOIL Program related to Turkish Agricultural Researches and Policies – Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, were held online during 29-31 March 2021. The Annual Science Days focused on presenting results and research of EJP SOIL Projects and discussed scientific topics related to the consortium. The science Days are an internal event for consortium partners. However, day one (Plenary Session) on "Europe's soils, the road to go", was opened to a broad audience including all stakeholders.

Partnership agreement between AARINENA and the Royal Botanical Garden, March 25, 2021

The Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA), signed a partnership agreement with the Royal Botanic Garden on Wednesday, March 25, 2021. The agreement, signed by the Executive Secretary of AARINENA, Dr. Rida Shibli, and the Director-General of the Royal Botanic Garden, Eng. Mohammad Shahbaz aims to develop and support the agricultural sector through framing and strengthening research fields and preparing proposed studies for joint projects. The agreement provides for strengthening cooperation in the fields of scientific research and training by inviting each party to visit the other to participate in training programs of common interest and cooperate in using the various devices and tools available to both parties to implement and facilitate Joint work and provide technical and economic advisory services and technical support.
Dr. Rida Shibli affirmed that AARINENA is keen as to communicate and cooperate with institutions sharing common interest in promoting agricultural and rural development, developing research and agricultural technology inside and outside the region, with the aim of promoting the development process and advancing the agricultural sector and its workers.

Mr. Mohammad Shahbaz stressed the importance of building partnerships with various parties in the research and scientific fields.

Mr. Mohammad Shahbaz valued this opportunity in the joint bilateral cooperation between the two institutions in building a true partnership and thanked Professor Rida Shibli for the initiative in communicating and completing the signing of the memorandum of understanding under discussion.
**AARINENA’s Webinar for the Olive Network, on March 25, 2021**

AARINENA arranged a Webinar for the Olive Network, virtually via Zoom platform for all members, about the “Olive Sector in Tunisia” by Dr. Ajmi Larbi, and this session was moderated by Dr. Salam Ayoub, the coordinator of AARINENA’s Olive Network, on March 25, 2021

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**Participation in a webinar “FOODSEC - Middle East Food Security Virtual Summit & Expo” virtually on March 24, 2021**

Participation in a webinar “FOODSEC - Middle East Food Security Virtual Summit & Expo” virtually on March 24, 2021

The sessions focused towards The Business of Arid Climate Agriculture, Innovation in Food and Beverage Sector: Challenges and Opportunities, Fish for Africa Innovation Hub: Scaling Egypt’s Success in Aquatic Food Production, IFPRI’s Contribution to Food and Nutrition Security in the MENA Region Before and After COVID, How WFP Works With the Private Sector, Bringing EPC into Agriculture Projects, Converting Desert Land into Arable Land, Bridging the Gap with Arable Countries, Development of Quinoa Value Chain to improve Food and Nutrition Security in the Middle East and Central Asian countries, Creating a Food System which will Help Drive the Knowledge Economy and Improve Human Health, Poultry Role in Sustainable Global Food Security, Innovations for Profitable and Sustainable Poultry Production in the Middle East Region, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in the Poultry Farming, Introducing International Islamic Food Processing Association - The B2B Platform for Enabling Intra-OIC Agri-Food Trade and Investment, The Role of Special Economic Zones in Food Security and Water and Food Security in Arid Environments.
AARINENA’s Webinar on Regional Manifesto of Forgotten Foods
March 22, 2021
AARINENA arranged a Webinar for the Regional Manifesto of Forgotten Foods March 22, 2021

Attendees:
1. Dr. Adil Abdelrahim, President of AARINENA
2. Dr. Faouzi Bekkaoui, Vice-president of AARINENA, Maghreb Sub-region representative
3. Dr. Rida A. Shibli, Executive Secretary of AARINENA
4. Dr. Fadila Al Salameen, Arabian Peninsula Sub-Region Representative
5. Dr. Abdelrahim Hunaiti, Universities Representative
6. Eng. Zeinab Almomany, Youth and Women Representative
7. Mr. Mohamed Zeyada, Nile Valley & Red Sea Sub-Region NGO Representative (Iktifaa Org. / Sudan)
8. Mr. Zinealabidine, Maghreb Sub-region Representative (Morocco)
9. Dr. Khaled Abulaila, Mashreq Sub-Region (NARC - Jordan)
10. Dr. Fuad Salama Mashreq Sub-Region (Farmers - Jordan)
11. Dr. Milad El Riachy, Mashreq Sub-Region (LARI - Lebanon)
12. Dr. Ali Al-Lawati, Arabian Peninsula Sub-Region Representative (Oman)
13. Dr. Zübeyde ALBAYRAM DOĞAN, Western Asia Sub-Region Representative (Turkey)
14. Ms. Tuncay TOPDEMİR, Western Asia Sub-Region (Turkey)
15. Dr. Mansour Aldalas, Nile Valley & Red Sea Sub-Region (Yemen)
16. Dr. Rakesh Kumar Singh (ICBA)
17. Dr. Carlo Fadda (Alliance of Bioversity International/CIAT)
18. Dr. Alessandro Meschinelli (GFAR)

Dr. Adil Abdelrahim, the President of AARINENA, welcomed all participants and thanked them for sparing their time to participate in this very important Regional Webinar on Forgotten Foods. In his opening remarks, Dr. Adil Abdelrahim indicated that AARENINA tried to diversify the prospective innovation's partners participating in this meeting in order to represent a wider array of inputs. After that, he mentioned that the farmers communities, particularly the small-scale producers, are at the heart of the new movement that aimed at the development of sustainable diverse Agri-food systems through a new vision in research and innovation that appreciate the role and the importance of forgotten foods, traditional knowledge in our agri-food system nutritionally, socially, ecologically, culturally, and
economically. The main aim of this webinar was to establish our regional agenda on forgotten foods and thus agree on a set of priority areas that can revive forgotten foods back in our agri-food system. These activities came under the umbrella of a collective action on forgotten foods that are agreed upon by GFAR steering committee and GFAR Secretariat and lead by the Alliance of Bioversity International/CIAT with the objective of determining the regional priority areas that can lead to the development of the regional manifesto on forgotten foods. Then the regional manifestos from the different regional organizations (AARINENA, FARA, APAARI, Latin America etc.) will be merged into a global manifesto/declaration on forgotten (smart) foods. A global plan of action that aims at transforming the agricultural research and innovation system toward the advancement of neglected and underutilized species and forgotten foods leading to a diversified, sustainable agri-food system. Finally, Dr. Adil Abdelrahim closed his speech by wishing all the participants a successful meeting and constructive deliberations.

**Partnership Agreement between Iktifaa organization & AARINENA, March 09, 2021**

A partnership agreement was signed virtually on March 09, 2021 between Iktifaa and the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA), on enhancing information exchange, scientific research and the development of agricultural technology.

This step comes to benefit from the experiences of the AARINENA Association to build a stable ground towards supporting Sudanese farmers, increasing local production of basic products such as wheat and grains, and working on designing a food policy towards achieving food security in Sudan.

The AARINENA Association aims to increase self-reliance on food and agriculture, and to improve the general well-being of the people of the Near East and North Africa region while preserving and improving the productive capacity of the natural resource base.
AARINENA Executive Committee meeting - preparing and discussions regarding Fifteenth General Conference March, 8, 2021

AARINENA Executive Committee meeting - preparations and discussions regarding Fifteenth General Conference March, 8, 2021

Attendees:
19. Dr. Adil Omer Salih Abdel Rahim, President of AARINENA
20. Dr. Faouzi Bekkaoui, Vice-president of AARINENA and Maghreb Sub-Region Representative
21. Dr. Rida Shibli, AARINENA Executive Secretary
22. Ms. Seta Tutundjian, Non CGIAR organizations Representative (ICBA)
23. Dr. Hassan Machlab, ICARDA Representative
24. Dr. Fadilah Al Salameen, Arabian Peninsula Sub-Region Representative (KISR)
25. Dr. Naem Mazahreh on behalf of Dr. Nizar Haddad, Mashreq Sub-Region Representative
26. Dr. Bülent SÖNMEZ, Western Asia Sub-Region Representative
27. Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Ali Alolofi, Nile Valley & Red Sea Sub-Region Representative
28. Dr. Abdelrahim Hunaiti, Universities Representative

Based on the meeting the adopted scenario is as below:
Writing a formal letter and sending it to AARINENA members. This letter will mention that we need to extend the current Executive Committee members for one year because of COVID-19 situation and due to difficulty of having the 15th GC on time. Also due to internet problems in some countries, a virtual meeting might not let all members to join the meeting.
This scenario was accepted and we took the confirmation from approximately all of AARINENA’s members to extend AARINENA’s EC for extra year.
AARINENA’s Webinar for the Plant Genetic Resources Network Zoom Meeting, February 11, 2021
AARINENA arranged a Webinar for the Plant Genetic Resources Network, virtually via Zoom platform, about the “NARC experience in the In-situ and Ex-situ conservation of Plant Genetic Resources” by Eng. Sameh JARRAR, and this session was moderated by Dr. Khaled Abulaila, the coordinator of AARINENA’s Plant Genetic Resources Network, on February 11, 2021

AARINENA’s Webinar for the Medicinal and Herbal Plants Network Zoom Meeting, January 26, 2021
AARINENA arranged a Webinar for the Medicinal and Herbal Plants Network, virtually via Zoom platform. This session moderated by Dr. Ali Al Lawati, the coordinator of AARINENA’s Medicinal and Herbal Plants Network, on January 26, 2021 and involved the following presentations:

A. In Vitro Production of Secondary Metabolites from Medicinal Plants Grown in Jordan, Dr. Rida Shibli
B. Medicinal and aromatic herbs: the most important research and results at the National Institute for Agricultural Research in Morocco, Dr. Khadija El-Bakhi
C. Institute National De La Recherche Agronomique D'algerie (INRA), Dr. Blama Aicha

Characterizing & Assessing Research Quality for Scaling the Impact for Innovation & Development Network’s activation, January 23, 2021
The Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in The Near East and North Africa (AARINENA) and the Islamic World Academy of Sciences (IAS) jointly arranged an
Important Webinar on Characterizing & Assessing Research Quality for Scaling the Impact for Innovation & Development Network’s activation, January 23, 2021

Dr. Rida Shibli and Dr. Nael Thaher gave presentation about Characterizing & Assessing Research Quality for Scaling the Impact for Innovation & Development Network’s activation.

**AARINENA’s Webinar for the Biotechnology Network, January 14, 2021**

AARINENA arranged a Webinar for the Biotechnology Network, virtually via Zoom platform. This session was moderated by Dr. Henda Al-Mahmoudi, the coordinator of AARINENA’s Biotechnology Network, on January 14, 2021, and involved a presentation on “In Vitro Production of Secondary Metabolites from Medicinal Plants Grown in Jordan” by Dr. Rida Shibli and followed by a fruitful discussion about tissue culture.

**AARINENA Executive Committee (2020) Jan. 11, 2021 Virtually**
AARINENA Executive Committee (2020) Jan. 11, 2021 Virtually

Attendees:
1. Dr. Adil Omer Salih Abdel Rahim, AARINENA President
2. Dr. Rida Shibli, AARINENA Executive Secretary
3. Dr. Matthew Montavon, GFAR Representative
4. Ms. Seta Tutundjian, Non CGIAR organizations Representative (ICBA)
5. Dr. Hassan Machlab, ICARDA Representative
6. Dr. Fadilah Al Salameen, Arabian Peninsula Sub-Region Representative (KISR)
7. Dr. Nizar Haddad, Mashreq Sub-Region Representative
8. Dr. Bülent SÖNMEZ, Western Asia Sub-Region Representative
9. Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Ali Alolofi, Nile Valley & Red Sea Sub-Region Representative
10. Dr. Abdelrahim Hunaiti, Universities Representative

Dr. Shibli presented the report of AARINENA’s activities conducted during 2020.

Then Dr. Adil Abdelrahim discussed TAP Initiative:

According to the agenda of the meeting the involvement of AARINENA in Tropical agriculture platform (TAP) initiative was presented by the President of AARINENA Dr. Adil indicated that TAP (Tropical Agricultural Platform) is a G20 initiative for capacity development in agricultural innovation system in the tropics mainly targeting the least developing countries and now extended to sub-tropical countries, which is good for AARINENA because very few member countries lie within the tropics. TAP developed a common framework for capacity development in the agricultural innovation system. The framework is used to harmonize the different approaches on capacity development in support of agricultural innovation. AARINENA was part of that expert group which developed the common framework of TAP, and is mainly a shift from the focus on achieving individual merits and competition to promoting collaboration and teamwork among organizations. Moreover, TAP has developed a knowledge sharing mechanism called TAPipedia, a platform for sharing information and knowledge, experience and success stories among TAP partners, that make up 49 partners. TAP has developed two plans of work: the first one covered the period 2013–2017, during that work plan TAP developed the common framework and the second plan of work (current one) covered the period 2018 – 2021, in
which the activities in piloting the common framework extended from six to eight countries and in the future, which was discussed in the previous TAP partner assembly, developing countries from the sub-tropics will be included, and AARINENA as a partner of the TAP can contribute to TAP since both have common vision on agricultural research and innovation, capacity development and knowledge sharing. AARINENA and its Executive Committee members can contribute more to the awareness campaign for TAP framework, that was initiated during AARINENA 15th General Conference 2018 and we have to reactivate this campaign and arrange workshops and meetings on a common framework of TAP in collaboration with different partners. We must encourage the member countries to pilot TAP common framework on Capacity Development of Agricultural innovation system. We know that the application for fund to test the TAP framework is by countries not by the region and we asked TAP secretariat in the previous meeting that we need to have the regional organization on board. He hopes that our countries in the future would benefit from this application for funding. In fact, Sudan has applied for that because it was considered one of the tropical counties in 2018, and Sudan can apply again in the future for 2022-2025 work plan. Dr. Adil suggested that AARINENA can benefit from these activities that link to TAP especially in the innovation and knowledge sharing. So, we need to package our activities that can contribute to TAP and feed in its plan of work. We also must activate our contribution to TAPipedia which is an information sharing mechanisms, and it is open for all partners to share information, knowledge, and success stories. In the past, we nominated a technical person for that but now we need to do that through the Executive Secretary Office. The link and connection of AARINENA with TAPipedia will improve its visibility since TAPipedia is a global hub for knowledge and information sharing.

Also, AARIENA’s EC members discussed the 15th General Conference of AARINENA.
**IAS Webinar Session 5, January 7, 2021**
The Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA) in partnership with the Islamic World Academy of Sciences (IAS) invited all partners and members to a series of Webinars on Agriculture Production and Food Security under COVID-19 Pandemic, Session 5, on January 7, 2021

**Dr. Dilfuza Egamberdieva**  
*National University of Uzbekistan, EcoBiome R&D, Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

**Thursday: 7 January 2021 at 11:00 am**  
**AMMAN**  
**(09:00 am GMT)**

**AARINENA’s Webinar for the Date Palm Network, January 05, 2021**
AARINENA arranged the Webinar for the Date Palm Network, virtually on the zoom platform, this session moderated by Dr. Muna Mashaal, the coordinator of AARINENA’s Date Palm Network, on January 05, 2021 and involved presentations as follows:

1. Dr. Reda Meziani, the role of palm tissue cultivation in the reconstruction of oases in Morocco.
2. Dr. Mohamed Kamal. The current status of the red palm weevil in Egypt and methods of control  
   a. Dr. Ahmad Namsi, "The reality and prospects of date palm cultivation in Tunisia"
Biodiversity Zoom Meeting, 5 January 2021
Dr. Shibli gave presentation during the Biodiversity Zoom Meeting, 5 January 2021