

Monday 29 March: 0830-13:00

What are the challenges we need to address.

Building a shared vision for change

A 20 minutes talk

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols observed.

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to set the scene of this working session on how we can **build a shared vision for change**.

- But first of all, I would like to welcome all participants and to thank you for sparing the time to contribute to the vital issue of strengthening global agricultural research for development
- On behalf of the delegates, i would like to express our appreciation to the government and the people of France for their welcome and hospitality
- I also would like to thank the local and international organizing committees for the huge effort they have made to ensure the success of this historic first global conference on agricultural research for development (GCARD).

We are all gathered here this week for this **historic occasion** when the first step of change is being set. When the GFAR triennial meetings and CGIAR AGM are united to become GCARD.

This is a **major milestone in the evolution of ARD** for it to revitalise and deliver greater impact in meeting the needs of the poor, especially small holder farmers in the developing world.

Therefore, today and the rest of the week, marks the day when we are all contributing to the shaping of the future of ARD in a significant way. Our diversity proves the complex challenge we face, and our number demonstrates our commitments to embrace new ways of doing business. But let's not forget that the most important stakeholders, the hundreds of millions of resource poor farmers, livestock keepers, fish producers and forest dwellers are not well represented. This gives work for and amongst those people, special responsibility to speak up for them. There is no ranking amongst us, the delegates we are all bound to represent our constituents to the best of our abilities. **WE should not fail to meet our responsibility to shaping the future of ARD in a significant way.**

But why are we here?

- **Talking and listening to the discussions along the corridors, I still here the usual networking and agenda setting.**
- **But I am also proud to feel the changes and openness. There is a sense of consciousness of the big task that we are here to define a plan for increasing the effectiveness of ARD across the globe.**
- **This is not going to be an easy task and it should not stop here in Montpellier, rather it should mark the beginning of new and different change.**

In 2007, when most of us met at the last CGIAR AGM in Maputo,

Mozambique, we all endorsed the creation of GCARD. This has triggered the GCARD process that lasted for almost one year. It provided a unique opportunity for stakeholders across the world to express their views in shaping the future of ARD. Overall 1,500 stakeholders from 200 countries participated in regional electronic consultations; 41% of them were from outside the traditional research domain, i.e. farmers, CSO, private sector, policy, donors, etc.

The GCARD process entailed consecutive consultations feeding into each other.

- It was kick-started by **regional reviews** carried out to provide an up-to-date status of the development context and ARD priorities in each region.
- The **e-consultations** reached out to greater number of stakeholders, were informed about the regional review.
- The regional review and e-consultation in turn informed the **face-to-face consultations** that identified gaps in current ARD priorities and areas where knowledge and partnerships are most required.
- The F2F consultations also captured stakeholder feedback about the **CGIAR Alliance's version** of its strategic research framework at the time.
- The outputs of the regional F2F consultations were fed to the **global authors' team report** which synthesized global issues and elements of an action plan which we shall collectively concretise tomorrow and the day after.

Parallel to these consultations, the CGIAR had their own internal process to formulate the desired changes to make CGIAR more open and responsive to development challenges. WE all hope that CGARD will unit these two processes towards a common action plan.

We've heard yesterday the awareness among leaders about the complex and diverse challenges we face such as doubling agricultural

production by 2050, the 1 billion hungry people, climate change, globalization.

They all recognize that research has been instrumental in continually increasing agricultural productivity and reducing production risks to respond to the ever growing demand resulting from population expansion and rising per capita consumption, as well as an increasingly risky production environment.

We all agree that research remains a key tool for achieving further increases in productivity, however its impact has not been adequate.

There are various reasons why research failed to achieve adequate impact. I could name at least 5 that most of us are aware of such as;

1. **Under investment in research and capacity development** which limited the generation of knowledge and technologies required to address the needs of the poor and in providing the support required for their adoption.
 - a. for example: only 4 poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) out of 24 examined by the inter-academy council study on African ARD cited ARD as a priority for poverty reduction. Many commitments remain unfulfilled; Maputo declaration; Gleneagles and recently, the l'Aquila Declaration.
 - b. The impact of research is dependent on adoption of research outputs. The promise of impact (*evidence of*

returns) is an important inducement for governments, private sector and international development partners to invest in ARD.

2. **Utilisation of available investments has not been efficient** due to discontinuities in the ARD architecture, for example, the CGIAR , GFAR's regional fora, NARS, CSOs plus academic institutions have been functioning separately and not adequately integrated. This is replicated at the national and community level, scientists do not sufficiently engage relevant non-research actors.
3. **Research is not sufficiently integrated within the processes supporting wider development.** ARD on its own cannot bring about development. For example, it cannot singularly reduce undernourishment. Its work is dependent on complementary contributions from other sectors such as infrastructure, well developed markets, health, finance, etc. Policy is the other organizing frame for this integration.
4. **Mechanisms for enhancing accountability** of researchers especially to the end users, their primary clients, are weak. Researchers need the support of end users in advocating for investment.
5. **Under exploited collaboration (South-South and North-South).** Potential spillovers from investments made in the

North and some countries in the South e.g. China, Brazil, India have not been adequately harnessed.

So with GCARD, our biggest contribution will be to catalyze a new and different change. GCARD should be seen as the platform through which the global ARD system can collectively map out solutions and associated actions for reforms for:

1. Addressing constraints that prevent ARD from realising its potential;
2. Addressing projected challenges
3. Building upon current and emerging opportunities notably commitments from recent high level summits, including L'Aquila.

What should we expect to achieve from this conference? I could cite 4 issues as follows;

1. **Concretisation of GCARD as an inclusive platform** (CGIAR + GFAR stakeholders) for deliberating on the reforms required to enhance the effectiveness of the global ARD system including translating commitments from high level summits into actions
2. **Validation of the CGIAR's priority research themes** (mega programmes) by national and regional level stakeholders confirming the relevance and fit or otherwise of these themes

with the development aims of countries and regions. Also, a common understanding of roles the CGIAR and other ARD actors are expected to play

3. **Learning and Networking:** The conference is designed to facilitate dialogue and interaction in order to afford participants an opportunity to network and learn for one another. It is well known that some of the most important and enduring relationships are struck through interactions at such forums.
4. **An Action Plan** (the Montpellier Action Plan or RoadMap) for reforming and reorienting agricultural research to enhance its development outcomes especially in meeting needs of the poor.

Structure of the conference

The conference started yesterday with a high level dialogue focusing on the development policies, investments and changes required to increase the effectiveness of national agricultural research systems.

We were reminded that we are working on behalf of 1 billion hungry people to achieve food security, to take care of our planet in the face of climate change, create innovative partnership that can make a difference, work towards creating farming as a business.

Day 2, March 29; (today) focus is on the priority issues for increasing ARD impacts. These will be drawn from:

- A region-by-region analysis of the needs that can be addressed by ARD.
- Common themes and needs identified by the GAT
- CGIAR analysis of priority themes in which international research can best support national ARD efforts

Day 3, March 30; (tomorrow). Focus is on: (i) CGIAR's research themes and (ii) identification of the changes needed to improved development impact of ARD.

- 2 parallel sessions; 8 break outs per session.

Day 4: March 31; Wednesday: Development and endorsement of the Montpellier action plan; discuss the way forward to the next GCARD.

Conclusion

This first GCARD is being held at time when developing-world agriculture is commanding the highest attention in over four decades. This attention is certain to wane in the coming years. We therefore *must make hay while the sun shines*.

- We need to **translate commitments for support into actions and to translate the support into impact.**
- We need to **strengthen innovative collaboration** (north-south and south-south) to tap into wealth of relevant experiences

abundant in some countries yet lacking in others. Along with this we need to enhance the capacities of developing countries to share and utilise knowledge and information—(to engage in innovation).

- Last and certainly not least, since we all have a stake in ARD we need to **evolve the necessary institutional mechanisms and capacities** that will enable all relevant stakeholders to play their role and do so effectively.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank GFAR for accepting to organise the conference and oversee the pre-conference processes.

I would also like to thank the following for the various they played towards making this conference happen

- GCARD taskforce,
- GFAR steering committee with special recognition for the Chair, Dr. Adel El Beltagy
- GFAR secretariat, with special recognition of Mark Holderness, Executive Director
- CGIAR, special thanks to Cathy Sierra and Ren Wang
- the CGIAR Alliance,

- the local organising committee, with special recognition to Dr. Pierre Fabre and Alain Derevier
- regional fora,
- donors and sponsors, and
- stakeholders who participated in the consultations and those attending the conference ,

Wish everybody a very rewarding time at the conference.