GFAR 2003 Conference Report
22–24 May 2003
Dakar, Senegal

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AARINENA</td>
<td>Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>AARINENA-RAIS</td>
<td>AARINENA Regional Agricultural Information System</td>
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<td>Agri-SMEs</td>
<td>Agro-based Small and Medium-sized Enterprises</td>
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<td>APAARI</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions</td>
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<td>ARCs</td>
<td>Agricultural Research Centers</td>
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<td>ARD</td>
<td>Agricultural Research for Development</td>
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<td>ARIs</td>
<td>Advanced Research Institutions</td>
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<td>ARS/USDA</td>
<td>Agricultural Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture</td>
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<td>CAADP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme</td>
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<td>CAC</td>
<td>Central Asia and Caucasus</td>
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<td>CGIAR</td>
<td>Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research</td>
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<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
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<td>EFARD</td>
<td>European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development</td>
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<td>EGFAR</td>
<td>Electronic Global Forum on Agricultural Research</td>
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<td>EIARD-Infosys+</td>
<td>European Agricultural Research for Development Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMBRAPA</td>
<td>Empresa Brasileña de Pesquisa Agropecuaria</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESSD</td>
<td>Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO/AGST</td>
<td>Agricultural and Food Engineering Technologies Service of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<td>FAO/WAICENT</td>
<td>World Agricultural Information Centre of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<td>FARA</td>
<td>Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa</td>
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<td>FORAGRO</td>
<td>Foro Regional de Investigación y Desarrollo Tecnologico Agropecuario</td>
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<td>FOs</td>
<td>Farmers’ Organizations</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GFAR</td>
<td>Global Forum on Agricultural Research</td>
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<td>GKP</td>
<td>Global Knowledge Partnership</td>
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<td>GLOBAL. RAIS</td>
<td>GLOBal ALliance of the Regional Agricultural Information Systems</td>
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<td>GPPs</td>
<td>Global Partnership Programmes</td>
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<td>IARCs</td>
<td>International Agricultural Research Centers</td>
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<td>ICM</td>
<td>Information and Communication Management</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technologies</td>
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<td>IDRC</td>
<td>International Development Research Centre</td>
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<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<td>INFOTEC</td>
<td>Sistema de Información Científica y Tecnológica del Sector Agropecuario en las Américas</td>
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<td>IPGRI</td>
<td>International Plant Genetic Resources Institute</td>
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<td>IPRs</td>
<td>Intellectual Property Rights</td>
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<td>IRD</td>
<td>Integrated Rural Development</td>
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<td>iSC</td>
<td>interim Science Council</td>
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<td>ISNAR</td>
<td>International Service for National Agricultural Research</td>
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<td>ISRA</td>
<td>Institut Sénégalais de Recherche Agricole</td>
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<td>IT-PGRFA</td>
<td>International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</td>
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<td>LABEX</td>
<td>Laboratório Virtual da Embrapa no Exterior</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>NAFAR</td>
<td>North American Regional Forum on Agricultural Research</td>
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<td>NARS</td>
<td>National Agricultural Research Systems</td>
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<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>New Partnership for Africa’s Development</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organizations</td>
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<td>PEAR Group</td>
<td>Participatory Education, Awareness and Resources Group</td>
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<td>PhAction</td>
<td>Global Post-harvest Forum</td>
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<td>RAIS</td>
<td>Regional Agricultural Information System</td>
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<td>RF</td>
<td>Regional Forum</td>
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<td>RKS &amp; IP</td>
<td>Rural Knowledge Systems and Innovation Process</td>
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<td>RUN</td>
<td>Rural Universe Network</td>
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<td>SRF</td>
<td>Sub-Regional Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>WARDA</td>
<td>West Africa Rice Development Association</td>
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<td>WEHAB</td>
<td>Water, Energy, Health, Agriculture and Bio-diversity</td>
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1 Introduction

The theme of the Second Triennial GFAR Conference held in Dakar, Senegal, 22nd to 24th of May, 2003 (GFAR 2003) was “Linking Research and Rural Innovation to Sustainable Development”. It was a very appropriate theme given the current global focus and attention on sustainable development issues as well as increased research interest in innovation processes. The goal of the conference was to review achievements and take stock of lessons learned during the current triennium (2000-2003), identify new and emerging global issues, threats and opportunities of relevance to agricultural research for development (ARD). The outcomes of both exercises were used to develop a framework for ARD activities required to alleviate the threats and build on the opportunities. Approximately 400 participants, representing the seven recognized stakeholder groups of GFAR from all regions of the world, contributed towards addressing the above goal through active participation in the various sessions, events and activities of the conference.

An innovative feature of GFAR 2003 was a two-day pre-conference workshop of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). One of the objectives of this workshop was to give the CSOs ample time and opportunity to debate and refine their vision of sustainable agriculture, so that they could identify issues of importance to be addressed by the GFAR family, and to develop strategies to actively participate in GFAR 2003.

The President of Senegal, Maître Abdoulaye Wade, who presided over the opening session, emphasized his deep conviction of the relevance and place of agricultural research in development, thanks to ample demonstration from the Senegalese national agricultural research institute (ISRA). However, he cautioned that such research must show tangible impact on targeted communities. Representatives of Canada, Italy, the European Commission, FAO, and CSOs as well as the GFAR Chair also acknowledged the central role of research which they also pointed out must be demand driven, hence the importance of the partnership concept espoused by GFAR. Without exception, all speakers acknowledged the value-added approach of GFAR built on strategic partnerships for ARD.

Important topics and themes for reflection in order to fully address the goal of the conference were provided during the keynote address session chaired by Louise Fresco, Assistant Director General, Food and Agriculture Organization. After a brief introductory remark by the session chair, Mohammad Roozitalab, the Chair of GFAR, delivered the first formal presentation of GFAR 2003. This was followed by two keynote addresses - the first by Ian Johnson, Vice-President of the Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (ESSD) at the World Bank, on “Outcomes of the Summits and their Implications for Agriculture”, and the second by Wiseman Nkulhu, Chair of the NEPAD Steering Committee, on “Emerging Global Issues in Sustainable Development and the Response of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development” (NEPAD initiative). The two addresses identified new and emerging issues of relevance for ARD and were complemented by a report on the implementation of the GFAR business plan by the GFAR Executive Secretary, Olanrewaju Smith, entitled “From Dresden to Dakar: Achievements, Gaps and the Way Forward”. The presentation of the business plan summarized past lessons for future use, and was chaired by Kanayo Nwanze, the Director General of WARD-Africa Rice Centre.

The subsequent activities and events were designed with an eye on the conference goal and expected outputs. First was a poster session followed by a panel discussion on successful cases of partnerships in ARD. A ten-person panel composed of representatives of each of the five GFAR Regional Fora, and the NGO, FO, ARI and the IARC constituencies as well as the general audience were presented with two case studies selected after a well-advertised competitive poster session. They had the opportunity to discuss, and identify essential elements for, successful ARD partnerships. Five parallel sub-plenary sessions on global and inter-regional partnership programmes constituted the second set of activities, and continued the debate on partnership issues with a focus on specific topics of research for development which stakeholders could jointly implement. These sub-plenary sessions provided a singular opportunity to strengthen old partnerships, as well as develop and build new ones around issues of common interest to GFAR stakeholders and of relevance to ARD. Lastly, three side events were organized on the CGIAR regional priority-setting exercise, a global agenda for Information Communication Management and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources and the Global Conservation Trust.

Periodically throughout the conference participants were divided into homogeneous groups along stakeholder lines or heterogeneous groups in roundtables. Armed with the inputs from various sources,
their own experiences, expectations, and group interests, participants were given the opportunity to deliberate, brainstorm, exchange views and formulate recommendations, conclusions and guidelines that could be used to design a business plan for the next triennium.

2 Pre-GFAR 2003 CSO Workshop

A total of 48 participants (33 NGOs and 15 Farmers’ Organizations representatives from 37 countries) attended the Pre-GFAR 2003 CSO Workshop which provided a unique opportunity for this group of stakeholders to discuss and exchange information on recent important developments in ARD. They seized the opportunity to refine their vision of ARD and highlight particular concerns that needed to be addressed by the larger GFAR family. In addition, they were able to establish strategies and mechanisms for effective representation at the various governance structures of GFAR and its regional and sub-regional organizations.

2.1 CSO vision of ARD

NGOs and Farmers’ Organizations agreed that farmers have a central role to play in addressing the objectives of food security, poverty eradication and sustainable management of natural resources. While farmers envision a world free from hunger and poverty where natural resources are managed in a sustainable way, NGOs added some other dimensions and specifically identified the following components: small-scale farmer-led agriculture that is characterized by a stronger focus on household food security; conservation of biodiversity; resource-based conflict resolution; effective and inclusive partnerships; enhanced democratization with particular attention to social and gender equity and empowerment, and good governance.

2.2 Strategies to attain the vision

The group identified a number of strategies, activities and ideas that need to be pursued in order to realize this vision of ARD. They pleaded for a review of the types of research being carried out as well as the structure and nature of research partnerships. They suggested that since agriculture plays a multi-functional role (resource utilization, ecological and social functions) ARD must equally be multi-faceted and hence involve various stakeholders. Strong support should therefore be given to participatory research approaches, agro-ecosystem and farming systems research to ensure adequate stakeholder participation. Also crucial, according to the group, is the promotion of an enabling political, social and economic environment for the less-vocal stakeholders in ARD. Thus, the involvement and representation of farmers and NGOs in research governance structures is fundamental if they are to be considered as equal partners in the development process. It was suggested that while facilitating farmer and NGO representation at various levels, legitimacy, transparency and accountability needed to be ensured. Hence, the process should build on existing structures and mechanisms, which should be revisited and/or strengthened, when appropriate, in a democratic and participatory manner. The group concluded that this approach would facilitate the transition from national agricultural research institutions to national agricultural research systems, which includes stakeholders other than the research institutions.

The group endorsed the concept of partnerships in ARD activities but insisted that such partnerships should be based on reciprocity, mutual trust and learning, as well as on a shared vision and complementary strategies. The CSOs would like to see such partnerships - which they consider indispensable to the realization of their vision - promote and stimulate farmer innovation, facilitate research-extension linkages and promote capacity-building so that farmers and their representatives become true partners with essential leadership skills and analytical capacities that enable them to better express their needs.

While the CSOs see GFAR as a strategic platform for knowledge-sharing, they thought it important to also embrace both the media and local governments since they can provide an enabling environment in which ARD takes place. At the same time it is crucial to have coherent and stable government policies that facilitate the development of agriculture (e.g. in the areas of taxation, land and credit policy). Concern was also expressed over the declining public expenditure on agricultural research, and CSOs called on GFAR to join them in advocating for increased resource allocation to ARD.
Finally, sub-regional focal points were charged with liaising with GFAR and following up on these agreements, recommendations, and future activities related to ARD, were identified by both the FOs and NGOs.

3 Keynote Addresses Session

3.1 Summary of Welcome Speech - Mohammad H. Roozitalab, GFAR Chairman

The GFAR Chair, Mohammed Roozitalab welcomed participants to the GFAR 2003 Conference by thanking the host government and the national organizing committee for the excellent arrangements and facilities made available for the conference. He proceeded to acknowledge the people who created GFAR in October 1996 and cited the successes of GFAR thus far in facilitating and supporting key activities that provide the enabling environment for stronger multi-stakeholder involvement in ARD. Despite these successes, the GFAR Chair conveyed the need to continuously review our activities in ARD in the face of the threats and opportunities posed by the increasing poverty and food insecurity in countries of the South, the globalization process, and the ever-changing institutional environment, including liberalization of the agricultural sector. He re-emphasized his belief that scientific advances, particularly in the fields of natural resources management, information and communication, and biotechnology must lead to sustainable development benefiting all ARD stakeholders in an equitable manner. The GFAR Chair drew attention to some of the challenges, complexities and uncertainties of sustainable development that need to be effectively addressed and called on the participants to not only clarify their expectations from the GFAR 2003 Conference but make bold suggestions, recommendations and directives that would form the cornerstone of the framework for GFAR’s next triennial business plan.

3.2 Summary of Keynote Address - Ian Johnson, Vice-President, ESSD, World Bank

Ian Johnson of the World Bank presented six key issues that he felt should be reflected upon by the participants at the GFAR conference, five of which were derived from the outcomes of the many international summits and treaties over the last few years. They are poverty reduction, the need for a new institutional framework, the importance of the long-term agenda, WEHAB and the need for special attention to Africa. In his concluding remarks, he stressed one issue that had not emerged from these summits, but is of profound importance nonetheless: the transformational role that science and technology can play in society.

According to Johnson, poverty is an untenable economic and moral issue on a global scale whose time has come. The Johannesburg summit stressed that poverty reduction is at the heart of sustainability and planetary survivability and neither will be achievable without poverty reduction. In his second point, Ian Johnson suggested that there is a realization that the institutions of today are deficient and that existing frameworks need to be adapted to the present situation with an eye for the future, and due consideration given to accountability and transparency. The third key issue was the need to extend the timeframe when considering issues of a global nature. Therefore, the typical five-year timeframe within which issues such as sustainable development is viewed is short-sighted and 50 years seems more appropriate. The fourth issue Johnson cites is the undeniable linkage of agriculture to each of the other pillars of WEHAB (water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity), a concept that emerged from the Johannesburg summit. Ian Johnson’s final key point was the need to champion Africa for special focus as espoused by the NEPAD initiative. He applauded the spotlight on Africa and the holding of a number of key meetings in the region including the GFAR conference. One idea that Johnson thought was overlooked in all these world gatherings is the notion that science can play a central role in shaping and defining our common future. It is vital to encourage ministerial bodies to see science as transformational as well as encourage the general public to see science not as a threat but as an opportunity. This has to be a key advocacy role of GFAR, and one upon which it must initiate more debate. He suggested that the participants at the conference should stress the centrality of agricultural research to the future of agriculture, and in doing so to the future of our planet. Making this case through GFAR will be very useful in helping to put agriculture more strongly on the global agenda.
3. 3 Summary of Keynote Address - Wiseman Nkulhu, NEPAD Steering Committee Chairman

Professor Nkulhu, Chairman of the NEPAD Steering Committee and second keynote speaker at the conference, was invited to speak on the topic “Emerging global issues in sustainable development and the response of the NEPAD Initiative”. A major expectation was that his address would bring out NEPAD’s regional perspective on new and emerging challenges and opportunities in sustainable development of particular relevance to the African continent, and to which the global agricultural research community could respond.

The current challenges facing Africa and how this crisis situation contrasts sharply with the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) of halving hunger by 2015, was the point of departure for Professor Nkulhu’s keynote address. NEPAD was conceived by the African Heads of State in response to the many crises plaguing the continent. It has set an ambitious target of 7% annual growth rate in GDP over the next 20 years to enable African countries to eradicate poverty, achieve food security and build the foundations of sustainable economic development. According to Professor Nkulhu, NEPAD has adopted a two-pronged strategy for a comprehensive approach to Africa’s development: (1) accelerate the transformation of African economies through good governance, peace and security, and (2) establish fair and equitable economic relationships with the rest of the world. NEPAD considers agriculture and food security, health and education, peace and security, environment, market access and intra-Africa trade, infrastructure, science and technology, capital flows (overseas development assistance, debt cancellation, investment), regional integration, democracy, political, economic and corporate governance, and reversing Africa’s marginalization as priorities. Among these, agricultural growth was highlighted as the cornerstone of NEPAD’s poverty-reduction policy. The blueprint which sets out guidelines on how African governments intend to revitalize African agriculture and how African agriculture could best contribute to achieving the MDGs is the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), developed by NEPAD with assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization.

With regards to the way forward Professor Nkulhu indicated that NEPAD is developing a Disaster Prevention and Emergency Response Food Crises Programme to strengthen response capabilities to emergency food crises, focusing on the mobilization of financial resources from African governments as well as the private sector to increase investment flows in agriculture, addressing food security and HIV/AIDS, addressing the question of food reserve systems (what works and where) and strengthening NEPAD’s capacity to leverage financial and political support as well as advocacy with key partners to address Africa’s long- and short-term food requirements.

In his closing statements, Professor Nkulhu mentioned the importance of partnerships with civil society, Farmers’ Organizations, smallholder producers, women’s groups, international and regional agricultural research and technology development organizations in contributing to agricultural productivity in Africa and reversing the downward spiral of African agriculture. He concluded that NEPAD is, therefore, proposing several agricultural initiatives with the objective of enhancing smallholder livelihoods, namely (1) promoting small-scale water-harvesting, (2) school feeding programmes that focus on locally produced food, (3) soil fertility restoration through agro-forestry and mineral fertilizers, (4) seed multiplication, engendering and democratizing agricultural production, and (5) facilitation of micro-financing, enhancing and diversifying livelihood opportunities for vulnerable groups including youth and women, as areas for regional and international partnership collaboration.

4 GFAR 2000–2003 Report

A component of the goal of the GFAR 2003 conference was to review achievements, identify gaps and take stock of lessons learned during the current triennium of 2000 to 2003. This retrospective analysis was provided by the GFAR Executive Secretary in a presentation entitled “From Dresden to Dakar: achievements and the way forward”. The three documents used by the Executive Secretary to carry out this in-depth examination of the performance of GFAR during that period were: (1) the current GFAR business plan (2000-2003), (2) the report of the first external review of GFAR and (3) responses to specific recommendations and demands made by the various GFAR stakeholders at the end of the first GFAR Conference in 2000.

Taking each of the components of the business plan independently along with the corresponding external review comments, the first component - promoting research partnerships - the Executive Secretary
determined that the rhythm of developing and implementing Global Partnership Programmes (GPPs), which is the main instrument for fostering research partnerships, was rather slow. He also noted that the four ongoing GPPs and seven being developed focused mainly on crops, livestock and some form of crop-livestock integration, while no activity specifically addressed forestry, fisheries or their integration into crops and livestock research. The Executive Secretary cross-matched the GFAR portfolio of GPPs with the four thematic areas of inquiries GFAR had decided it would initially confine its activities to, in order to identify any neglected areas. He observed that while the older GPPs neglected policy management and institutional development issues, this was the favored theme of newer GPPs, which tended to neglect the genetic resources and biotechnology theme. He concluded that while the observed spread of GPPs across themes may appear acceptable, given the new and emerging sustainable development paradigm, GFAR may need to decide which thematic activities to emphasize in the future.

With regards to the second component of the business plan - contribution to the global knowledge pool in ARD - he observed that although GFAR is in a good position to contribute to the knowledge pool in order to influence people and policies, to date it has not adequately addressed this task, leaving a gap which needs to be filled urgently.

Capacity-building of the weaker GFAR stakeholders constitutes the third component of the business plan, and the Executive Secretary identified CSOs and National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) represented by their Regional and Sub-Regional Fora (RF/SRF) as weak links in the GFAR chain. He presented a number of innovative and interesting activities that GFAR and its secretariat have used in the recent past to address this issue and concluded that sufficient progress has been made, but that there is always room for improvement which could be achieved if some additional effort was concentrated on such activities as inter-regional collaboration, increased advocacy at various levels, and organizational capacity-building of NGOs and FOs.

With regard to the fourth and final component of the business plan - facilitating information exchange and knowledge flows amongst GFAR stakeholders and with others - he noted that the GFAR Secretariat is responsible for leading this component and has adequately responded to the need to develop an efficient system of information exchange and knowledge-sharing amongst the various GFAR stakeholders. A static electronic communication medium (EGFAR) was transformed to a dynamic user-friendly, searchable, regularly updated and interactive communication and information-exchange platform, with a range of innovative services. He concluded that the future task would be to keep up with a dynamic and rapidly changing information and communication-management sector, in order to appropriately improve horizontal communication among stakeholders.

At the end of the 2000 Dresden conference, the seven stakeholder groups made specific recommendations and demands that were to be addressed. They covered various issues including thematic areas of research to be privileged, greater clarity of roles between GFAR and its secretariat, balanced sectoral representation at GFAR meetings, etc. In general most of the demands and recommendations were adequately addressed with some still pending (emphasis on agro-ecology and natural research management research issues) or partly addressed (advocacy for a more balanced stakeholder participation of the CSO at various levels of decision-making on ARD).

As a conclusion to this analysis, the Executive Secretary used a six-point evaluation grid to prepare a GFAR score sheet with regards to achievements and gaps over the last three years. The six-point score sheet ranged from 1 being very poor to 6 being outstanding. The outcomes were:

- research partnerships: 4 = very good
- contribution to the knowledge pool: 2 = poor
- capacity-building of CSOs: 3 = good
- capacity-building of RF/SRF: 3 = good
- information flow: 5 = excellent
- responding to stakeholders’ needs: 4 = very good

The average score was of 3.5 = good to very good. The Executive Secretary underlined the importance of a collective effort of the GFAR group to move the average score from 3.5 toward 6 in the near future and suggested that responses to the following questions as well as suggestions formulated during the various
homogeneous stakeholders or heterogeneous roundtable discussion group sessions would constitute a good starting point.

- Should agricultural development activities undertaken by GFAR include crops, livestock, and forestry and fisheries sectors?
- On which issues of importance for ARD should GFAR stimulate debate and disseminate the outputs in order to influence the global agenda?
- Which thematic areas should GFAR actively promote over others?
- Is GFAR doing enough in terms of efforts to build capacity of RF/SRF and CSOs, and what strategies can GFAR use to build their organizational capacity?
- What strategies could GFAR use to further improve horizontal communication amongst stakeholders?

5 Roundtable Discussion

There was consensus in all the roundtables on the potential value-adding role that can and should be played by GFAR in supporting ARD and in facilitating the development of NARS through their RF/SRF so that they may in turn develop quality, integrated research and development programmes and projects. The need to clearly define and separate the roles of GFAR as a global entity along with its secretariat vis-à-vis those of the RF/SRF in order to avoid duplication and confusion was strongly expressed.

Other outputs from the roundtable discussion touched on the following important issues: (1) GFAR should serve as a global platform for advocacy, policy dialogue, information-sharing and communication amongst its stakeholders, fund-raising political support, and facilitating implementation of issues of global concern in ARD, (2) GFAR should promote participatory action research mechanisms through coordination, facilitation and supporting capacity-building for all of its stakeholders at community, national, regional and international levels, (3) GFAR should establish linkages with other important partners in development; (4) GFAR should engage the civil society, and facilitate the integration of agricultural innovation and participatory research into ARD.

In response to five specific questions raised, and concerning: the integration of crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries into agricultural development activities; thematic areas for special consideration; five top-priority issues for ARD; capacity-building of RF/SRF and CSOs; and improving horizontal communication among stakeholders, the following recommendations were made.

First, that agricultural research and development activities undertaken by GFAR should integrate crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries into agricultural development activities; thematic areas for special consideration; five top-priority issues for ARD; capacity-building of RF/SRF and CSOs; and improving horizontal communication amongst stakeholders, the following recommendations were made.

Second, that while continuing to work on the current thematic areas, GFAR should consider focusing on interactions between WEHAB and its current thematic areas. Still within this area of thematic focus, the roundtables identified some programme or project-level ideas GFAR may want to consider. These include: (1) mechanisms that promote participatory planning, (2) focus on research in neglected aspects of ARD, (3) a more active engagement with disadvantaged actors, (4) a reassessment of current research focus with due consideration of the difficulties developing countries faced with new treaties, standards and subsidies, and (5) linking smallholder farmers to markets, from local to global. It was also suggested that GFAR should avoid getting directly involved in the implementation of research projects or focusing on single-component issues in ARD.

Third, the top five priority ARD issues that GFAR should concentrate on were identified as: (1) genetic resource management, biotechnology biosafety, and intellectual property rights (IPRs), (2) natural resource management and agro-ecology, (3) commodity chains and underutilized species from production to consumption with more attention to socio-economic research, (4) policy analysis and management and institutional development, and (5) sustainable financing mechanisms.

Fourth, the roundtables noted that while some progress has been made in terms of efforts to build the capacity of RF/SRF and CSOs, more needs to be done. They recommended that GFAR should be more proactive in creating the necessary environment for stakeholder involvement in its activities and should
especially aim to foster partnerships inclusive of CSOs and the private sector. It was further recommended that GFAR should strive for equitable focus and attention across regions with due consideration for language and the recognition of distinct regional context, and that special attention should be given to capacity-building with particular attention to: (1) addressing the need for a new paradigm for capacity-building, (2) strengthening both the demand and supply side, (3) promoting regional collaboration, (4) facilitating access to advanced research facilities, (5) reducing the brain drain while improving the skills of local experts, and (6) sharing of information across Regional Fora, Sub-Regional Fora and NARS.

Fifth, that although the lines of horizontal communication among stakeholders have been improved upon since the last conference, GFAR should focus more on facilitating access to telecommunications in different regions of the world. This can be done through advocacy and should also include fund-raising for this purpose. EGFAR should be used as an effective tool to strengthen links between all the regional and sub-regional organizations and work should continue on building Regional Agricultural Information Systems (RAIS). Additionally, other regional organizations involved in communication of issues related to ARD should be encouraged to engage with GFAR and to have their information channels linked to the GFAR website.

6 Poster Session
A well-advertised competitive poster session on successful cases of agricultural research and development partnerships was organized for GFAR 2003. The objective was to identify critical elements required for successful ARD partnerships. The call for proposals was circulated through the GFAR stakeholder mailing list and the GFAR Secretariat received about 60 written submissions. After a screening process based on well-publicized and clear guidelines, 30 proposals were retained for development into posters for a competitive presentation during the conference. The two best proposals selected on the basis of their quality as well as their demonstration of a good partnership experience, were presented during a plenary session on sharing of successful Regional Fora and stakeholder experiences in ARD. The other 28 posters, displayed during the conference, were evaluated and scored for a GFAR merit award by a panel of seven judges representing the seven GFAR stakeholder groups.

Outside of the competition, other posters were displayed to share information with participants. In this category were: ongoing GPPs such as Regional Agricultural Information Systems (RAIS) as well as some other projects and activities from other stakeholders.

6.1 Panel Discussion
As indicated, the top two proposals were presented as case studies during a plenary session to a panel of 10 representatives from the recognized GFAR stakeholder groups and the general audience. The objective was to identify those critical elements responsible for the successful partnership experiences presented by the case studies, and enrich these with other elements identified by the panel and the participants based on their own regional or project-related experiences. The two case studies presented were on: Partnership for milk/meat preservation technologies by the PEAR Group from Kenya and the China-Canada dryland farming project by the Lethbridge Research Centre of Canada. Some of the essential elements for successful partnership that were identified include: the need for capacity-building skills not only to manage the project but also to manage the partnership; the need for a long-term approach for building partnerships; a clear definition of roles; and a firm commitment of all partners which can only be achieved if there is mutual respect among partners regardless of the level of their input, and if the activity adopts a holistic approach that takes into account the interests, objectives and expectations of all partners. The need for some flexibility to accommodate changes in interest and circumstances of partners, as well as occasional investments in infrastructure when needed, were also highlighted. These and other critical elements identified during the panel discussion need to be carefully considered and adopted by GFAR as we pursue the business of building partnerships around ARD activities.
7 Side Events
During the GFAR Conference three parallel side events took place during the lunch breaks. These events provided an opportunity for other stakeholders to share their experiences and activities.

7.1 Presentation of CGIAR Regional Priority-setting Report
Organized by the interim Science Council (iSC) of the CGIAR, the aim of this side event was to present the results of an ongoing consultation process to define CGIAR priorities and strategies. Highlights on the need to define common priorities for the increasing number of cross-centre initiatives in large and complex research projects for the CGIAR were presented. It was also indicated that when completed the exercise would provide donors with a view of the overall balance and guidance for resource allocation towards system priorities across the centres. This consultation process engages the different Regional Fora and has a global component dealing with cross-cutting issues and priorities. The issues presented were an early reading of results from the consultation and point the way to future directions. It was pointed out that this consultative exercise carried out so far would very well complement the traditional congruence analysis. The presentation was followed by active discussions with valuable suggestions and inputs from the participants, and it was concluded that the process should continue and also strive to benefit from the ongoing World Bank-led assessment and discussion on the role of science and technology.

7.2 Towards a Global Agenda for ICM
The GFAR Secretariat invited a select group of key ICM practitioners to present highlights and innovative aspects of ongoing activities with the objective of teasing out new ideas to improve horizontal communication amongst GFAR stakeholders. Eight presentations in the following three categories were made: (1) Regional Agricultural Information Systems (RAIS) issues, by EIARD-Infosys+, AARINENA-RAIS, AGROWEB Caucasus, and INFOTEC, (2) global issues, by FAO/WAICENT and GFAR (GLOBAL. RAIS project), and (3) successful initiatives in ICM activities, by RUN Network and ISNAR (iNARS initiative).
After the presentations all participants agreed that the following are major concerns: (1) better awareness of and maximize the benefits of the undertaken initiatives in order to achieve economies of scale and synergism, (2) strengthen RAIS through sharing of experiences at the intra- and inter-regional levels, and (3) definition of a global agenda for ICM, through a bottom-up approach, connecting activities and stakeholders. A proposal was endorsed to continue this discussion under the umbrella of iNARS.

7.3 International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources and Global Conservation Trust
This side event was organized by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in collaboration with the Global Conservation Trust of IPGRI.
The objective was to present the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT-PGRFA) with the aim of promoting its ratification and early entry into force.
The debate that followed a detailed presentation by Mr. José T. Esquinaz-Alcázar, the Secretary of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, led to the preparation of a draft “Dakar Declaration on the IT-PGRFA” which was later adopted by acclamation during the closing ceremony.

8 Sub-plenary Sessions on GPPs/Inter-regional Partnership Programmes
Five parallel sub-plenary sessions were organized and designed to maximize interaction among the members of the different GFAR stakeholder constituencies in discussing emerging themes around which potential GPPs could be developed. The themes which were selected, on the basis of some of the initiatives currently under development by some of GFAR stakeholders, include the following: (1) Rural Knowledge Systems and Innovation Processes, (2) Agro-based Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Markets in Developing Countries, (3) Agriculture/Livestock Integration, (4) Organizational Partnerships for Agricultural Research, and (5) Innovative Policy Directions and Approaches for Sustainable Agricultural Development.
8.1 Sub-plenary Session 1: Rural Knowledge Systems and Innovation Processes (RKS & IP)

Initiatives on rural knowledge systems and innovation process (RKS & IP) are currently being developed under the auspices of GFAR. They aim at addressing mutual learning and sharing of agriculture-related information, technology and knowledge among various ARD stakeholders in a participatory way so that these can be made accessible to communities in forms which they can utilize. It was deemed that innovation, as a process of social interaction that generates new knowledge within the actors, empowers local communities and plays an important role in improving rural livelihoods.

The need for a Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) to serve as a platform for global learning of local innovation systems was endorsed. It was recommended that this partnership should be built on current initiatives and should factor in different disciplinary and philosophical approaches. It should not only develop organizational, institutional and policy principles required to promote innovation systems but also promote and play an advocacy role for an innovation systems approach for research and facilitate the translation of lessons learned into policy. The potential of EGFAR, the electronic global forum, as a means for people in the field faced with local problems to access ideas globally was likewise recognized.

Some of the researchable issues that could be tackled under GKP are: (1) socio-cultural differences in the way people learn at various levels and effective ways of developing mutual social learning; (2) factors that enable successful innovation; (3) linking indigenous and scientific innovation systems; (4) power relations associated with RKS & IP; (5) competencies needed to manage and facilitate interaction between knowledge systems; (6) institutional mechanisms for scaling up principles and good practices in participatory innovation processes; (7) measuring impact and efficacy of mutual learning processes in improving livelihoods; and (8) impact of external factors (e. g. trade) on the success of innovation processes.

An electronic discussion will be launched to further the interaction on this topic as well as to explore institutional interests and potential contributions in the development of the GKP. A workshop is also envisaged in order to define the content of the global partnership on RKS & IP in more detail.

8.2 Sub-plenary Session 2: Agro-based Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Markets in Developing Countries

The role of Agri-SMEs and markets in agricultural development was carefully analyzed during the session. Presentations were made by the key speaker Ade Freeman and the resource person Gisele d’Almeida. Subsequent discussions led to the identification of the following key researchable areas:

- **Partnerships.** How can partnerships foster the development of Agri-SMEs? For example, by broadening the nature of partners, enhancing the role of NGOs and farmers.
- **Markets.** How are markets changing the nature of demand (market information, increased access and services)? It was suggested to intervene on the certification of quality standards.
- **Science and Technology (S&T).** How can S&T foster SME development? For example, by reducing the cost of production and improving quality standards to increase competitiveness, and reduce negative impacts on the environment.
- **Training.** There is a need to identify the types of training that can best contribute to the development of Agri-SMEs. For example, some participants outlined the need to transfer knowledge to the farmers with the aim of improving their business skills.
- **Rural finance.** How can we develop a sustainable funding strategy for agro-industrial development?

It was suggested to present the outputs of this session at a workshop on post-harvest systems - linking farmers to the market - that will be jointly organized by the GFAR Secretariat, FAO/AGST and PhAction, and which will be held at the FAO Headquarters in Rome in October 2003. Possibilities of developing a joint global partnership programme under the GFAR umbrella in collaboration with the other two similar initiatives led by FAO/AGST and PhAction will be explored during this workshop.
8.3 Sub-plenary Session 3: Agriculture/Livestock Integration

Crop-livestock integration has been identified as one of the priority issues that needs to be addressed in alleviating rural poverty and ensuring food security and safety. This issue was identified as highly important in all regional and sub-regional priority-setting processes. Two presentations were given during the sub-plenary session that focused on agriculture and livestock integration in the developing world with emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa. Some of the issues raised in these presentations included topics of relevance for agricultural planners and decision-makers such as: mixed farming systems, global trends, market access and consumer demand, policies and technology. In addition to this, two additional presentations were made on potential global partnerships.

The first was the proposal on Trypanosomiasis control developed over the last couple of years which has not yet attracted funding, in spite of a clearly focused subject and a strong consortium of stakeholders. The formulation of this GPP has been a complex and long exercise, and participants discussed the possibility of merging this topic within the broader context of a GPP on Agriculture and Livestock Integration.

The second example was the public/private sector partnerships for animal health products. This is an innovative, strategic alliance between different stakeholders that could be developed across regions for potential global impact. During the discussions, participants agreed that the livestock-agriculture integration system is a mechanism that can respond to poverty reduction and food security in different agro-ecological regions (semi-arid, semi-humid, highlands), economies and social contexts and that there are no generic templates or research initiatives which can be used across all regions.

Innovative researchable issues were also identified such as: methodologies, including socio-economic impact, exchanges of experiences across regions, market opportunities and prospects and policies. The participants suggested that the GFAR Secretariat should: (1) continue to facilitate dialogue between the stakeholders and help them in identifying their roles and responsibilities in GPP development, (2) facilitate partnership development (including the private sector), (3) play an advocacy role, (4) help in finding common solutions and cross-cutting issues for the elaboration of GPPs through consultation with the scientific community, the regions and sub-regions, encouraging South-South partnerships, (5) facilitate dialogue between the research community and donors, including the private sector (e.g. drug companies) to attract funds, and (6) take a leadership role on the above by creating specific task forces.

8.4 Sub-plenary Session 4: Organizational Partnerships for Agricultural Research

The need to both understand and identify factors responsible for producing more productive partnerships more effectively, and also to think strategically about how to enhance existing partnerships and forge new ones, especially involving new or less vocal stakeholders, was the driving force behind this session. Dr. Clayton Campanhola, Director-President of EMBRAPA, Brazil, as the keynote speaker presented an overview of EMBRAPA, stressing that the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation develops scientific collaboration with over 150 institutions and international organizations located in 50 different countries. Its pioneering project aimed at increasing inter-institutional cooperation was the creation of LABEX (EMBRAPA virtual laboratories abroad). The mechanism of these virtual laboratories was reviewed through experiences gained from partnerships with ARS/USDA and with AGROPOLIS in Montpellier, France.

In her presentation entitled “Improving benefits from transnational partnerships” Heike Michelsen, senior scientist from ISNAR, first outlined the factors that have contributed to the exponential growth of institutional partnerships over the past decade, and went on to identify issues and lessons learned. She then elaborated a proposal to develop a framework for cataloguing partnerships, analyzing reasons for their success or failure, and developing guidelines for the future.

Specific issues were raised and discussed after these two presentations, and during the general discussion the following next steps were endorsed: (1) under the GFAR umbrella, develop studies on partnerships reviewing the choice of investment, risks, transaction costs and cost-benefit analysis and reflecting on how partnerships go beyond information and knowledge sharing to development of new products; and (2) to pursue the development of a GPP based on the proposal presented by ISNAR, while taking on board some of the concerns, comments and suggestions expressed at this conference.
8.5 Sub-plenary Session 5: Innovative Policy Directions and Approaches for Sustainable Agricultural Development

The topic addressed in this sub-plenary session is connected to Action 4 of the GFAR 2000-2003 business plan approved in Dresden, Germany (i.e. policies and institutional frameworks). However, as underscored by the GFAR Executive Secretary, it is precisely on this topic that GFAR needs to strengthen its actions and build multi-stakeholder partnerships in order to bring about change towards an effective paradigm for sustainable agriculture and rural development.

The key speaker, Professor Alain de Janvry, empirically analyzed four key issues for success in rural development: (1) the increased attention on rural development to reach the MDGs; (2) the reasons for ineffectiveness of integrated rural development approaches; (3) new opportunities for success in rural development; and (4) the lessons learned from experience with new approaches. He proposed, instead, strategizing and investing in IRD (i.e. programmes to increase access to assets, programmes to improve the quality of the context where assets are used, transfer programmes for social protection, and programmes for the social incorporation of the poor). Resource person Dr. Marcelino Avila highlighted the range of policy interventions that should be considered for sustainable agriculture and rural development, whereas Professor Joachim von Braun focused on the question of what kind of world would be sustainable in 2050 and the gaps/deficiencies in the current policy discourse which require research.

Some of the key considerations and issues raised in presentations and discussions were: (1) effective policy, institutions and empowerment of people in the policy process are crucial for dealing with the urgent rural poverty and development problems, in particular for the poor and the smallholders; (2) there are valuable lessons and principles for integral rural development that can be drawn from past rural development approaches, from experimentation with new approaches, and from the emerging roles of NGOs, peasant organizations and other actors in the field; and (3) the lack of effective communication and distribution of relevant information from researchers, scientists and technicians to policy-makers, donors and other high-level authorities is hampering the necessary dialogue with and possible support from the higher echelons of power.

The first suggested targeted researchable issue is the identification, analysis and synthesis of valuable lessons on effective policies, strategies and tools relevant to integral rural development, sustainable agriculture, and/or poverty reduction, particularly in terms of improving the context or enabling environment, access to assets such as land, education, social capital, creation of sustainable productive and income-generating options, and provision of social protection and reduction of vulnerability of the poor and smallholders. The second issue is research on the long-term agricultural and rural development implications of strategic gaps in policy/institutional framework. Within its facilitation mandate, GFAR should play a proactive role, develop a clear understanding of the priorities and engage in a concrete plan of action with respect to policy and institutional improvement nationally, sub-regionally and globally and further development of a GPP.

9 Stakeholder Consultations

In the afternoon of the second day of the conference, stakeholder groups deliberated on their future contribution to GFAR, particularly on issues that the various constituency groups deemed critical for inclusion in the GFAR business plan 2004-2006 and in which they propose to be actively involved in the coming three years. The seven stakeholder groups were asked to provide some feedback on emerging issues outlined by the keynote speakers, and to suggest ways on how to improve their involvement in ARD activities at the sub-regional, regional and global levels. They also deliberated on strategies to improve their representation in various decision- and policy-making mechanisms at these different levels. Comprehensive terms of reference outlining the above discussion issues and others were provided to participants.
9.1 NARS and Regional and Sub-Regional Fora

On the subject of reinforcing the role of the NARS Committee, to perform a more programmatic function, they reiterated their conviction that in order to achieve a strong and relevant GFAR, there must be strong NARS and strong RF/SRF. The NARS continue to be fully convinced that to achieve a strong and relevant GFAR, there must be both strong NARS and strong RF/SRF. Through reinforcing the role of the NARS Committee, it will become more proactive and increasingly involved in strengthening the stakeholder group and enable them to better contribute to the effectiveness of GFAR.

The NARS recommended that GFAR should develop its capacity to be an effective and strong advocacy and advisory body for pushing ARD issues at the global level. It should promote and strengthen inter-regional cooperation on institutional innovations to serve as the venue for information exchange and sharing of experiences among NARS and RF/SRF in priority-setting.

To enable the NARS to achieve relevance and effectiveness, they recommended that GFAR give emphasis and priority attention to addressing both weak research and extension, and impact assessment of ARD outputs.

With regard to opening up of the RF/SRF of NARS to new stakeholders, the NARS concurred and expressed the feeling that extension agents/workers and representatives from national extension systems and experts should be better represented in GFAR undertakings as well as in RF/SRF activities. This is considered an effective way of bridging the gap between research and extension.

The NARS and RF/SRF felt they were in various stages of development of capacity-building. However, one commonality was that they all need strengthening in one way or another and in various aspects. The first being the establishment of functional information systems both at the national and local levels to provide easy access to technologies and important information for farmers and scientists. And the second, is a more systematic and effective priority-setting methodologies and decision support tools to be established and easily used by the NARS.

Lastly, the NARS expressed their commitment to work closely with other GFAR stakeholders for a stronger partnership and strategic alliance and more effectiveness in tackling global issues and concerns related to alleviation of poverty, increased food security and promotion of sustainable use of natural resources.

9.2 Farmers’ Organizations (FOs)

The farmers’ constituency stressed the importance of farmer participation in priority-setting and decision-making processes, particularly at the grassroots level. However, they insisted that extra efforts needed to be made to ensure legitimacy of representation and accountability to the constituents. Representatives must be chosen by FOs themselves and not simply appointed by other stakeholders, governments or research bodies.

Extension needs to be more effective, and the results of agricultural research need to be more accessible and user-friendly to the average farmer. FOs suggested that GFAR can play an important role in facilitating information exchanges between researchers and farmers, and between farmers themselves. Farmers want better access to research results and to build on local knowledge. This can be achieved through the coordination of the activities of national research institutes and exchange visits/study tours for farmers at the sub-regional level. Farmers requested assistance in building their leadership skills to ensure effective representation, advocacy and policy formation, and improving their communication and information-dissemination capacities.

The FOs proposed that in its next business plan GFAR take into account issues related to: agriculture and energy; agriculture and globalization, especially on the impact of globalization on the livelihood of small farmers; and agriculture and health, e.g. sanitary and phytosanitary and traceability requirements for export for food and farm products. Additionally, the Farmers’ Organization stakeholder group urged GFAR to endorse and promote the declaration of the side event on the Convention on Plant Genetic Resources.
Regional and sub-regional farmer focal points were nominated at the Pre-GFAR 2003 Workshop, and they will endeavor to work closely with GFAR in the future on issues of importance to farmers. Their status as representatives will be confirmed at the Mid-Term Meeting next October.

9.3 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

The NGO representatives present in Dakar affirmed the importance of ARD. They shared their vision of ARD as one that is led by small farmers and characterized by a stronger focus on household food security, poverty reduction and sustainable use of agriculture. Small-scale farmers include crop and mixed farmers, livestock keepers, fisher folk, and forest communities. They also defined farming as having multiple functions, including an ecosystems function, a production function and a social services function. ARD should also be geared towards the management and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity in a way that is sustainable and that minimizes conflicts over these resources. As such, this type of ARD should be anchored on effective and inclusive partnerships that are socially viable, gender sensitive and promote local empowerment.

NGOs also underscored the need for an enhanced social science dimension of ARD. Among the identified research areas which they deem important for GFAR to take into account in formulating its business plan for the next three years are: support to participatory systems research; research governance and management; institutional change; conflict resolution over resources; research on multiple-stakeholder collaboration processes; and inclusion of minority groups in the research process, gender equity, and democratization. NGOs also proposed that GFAR should also include market linkages and rural micro-finance in its agenda.

The NGOs nominated two representatives to the GFAR Steering Committee as well as Regional focal points for GFAR-related activities. They also formulated an action plan that aims to strengthen NGO constituency and mobilization.

9.4 Advanced Research Institutions (ARIs)

The ARI stakeholder group unanimously agreed that the notion of ‘Advanced Research Institutions’ has become redundant, and that the industrialized North should participate in GFAR through Regional Fora composed of a similar broad group of stakeholders, such as AARINENA, APAARI, CAC, FARA and FORAGRO. Since the Dresden conference, in 2000, Europe has strengthened the European Forum for Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD). The North American institutions will look at similar ways to enhance their involvement with GFAR by reactivating NAFAR and are strongly supported in this endeavor by their European counterparts. The ARIs also encouraged GFAR to seek ways to actively involve China, as well as to strengthen involvement from the Asia-Pacific region, for example by promoting the creation of Sub-Regional Fora. With regards to focus on ARD issues, the Northern fora see their primary responsibility in the fields of information exchange, capacity-building and scientific partnerships.

The ARI stakeholder group sees the role of GFAR as: (1) engaging in policy advocacy for ARD; (2) engaging information and capacity-building for more effective and efficient collaboration between southern and northern stakeholders; and (3) being a leading mechanism through which Regional Fora interact for the purpose of priority-setting.

ARIs encouraged the exchange of information that can lead to the development of ‘Centers of Excellence’ through the formation of inter-institutional research and education units. They also encouraged the regions to closely monitor the experience of LABEX and to see how this model can be further developed and promoted. LABEX-style partnerships could also be a first step in the development of inter-institutional research and education units as previously suggested.

9.5 International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs)

IARCs fully endorsed an advocacy role in ARD as a top priority for GFAR in addition to its traditional facilitation and catalytic functions. IARCs confirmed that they could provide information by sharing their research results and data, and form partnerships to support the advocacy role of GFAR through their networks and the Future Harvest Foundation.
The IARCs also recognized some of the same issues raised by Farmers’ Organizations and suggested that the present GPPs are insufficient to address adequately the concerns raised by Farmers’ Organizations. Additional research is required to address these issues and the IARCs can contribute in several areas in which they have a comparative advantage, namely: (1) strategic research on broad global issues, (2) capacity to implement complex research and development programmes, (3) substantive knowledge in specific areas, and (4) experience in capacity-building at institutional and individual levels.

The IARCs commented on the GFAR Conference and actions for follow-up by suggesting that GFAR facilitate the establishment of partnerships around sectoral issues relevant to rural development (e.g. water, health, energy).

The IARCs were quite satisfied with their current level of representation in the RF/SRF, in GFAR as well as with the occasion provided for them to interact with other stakeholders. However, they recognized the need for further improvements in IARCs interaction with RF/SRF, and with GFAR. They will accordingly explore avenues for this and will enhance internal mechanisms to inform IARC staff.

The IARCs recognized that RF/SRF are becoming increasingly strong and effective and that GFAR will need to identify its niche to add value as this process evolves. The latter should create new opportunities for GFAR.

9.6 Donor Community

The donor group reiterated its interest in and commitment to the underlying principle of GFAR, built around innovative programmes that foster collaboration amongst different stakeholders involved in ARD. The in-kind contribution of various donors, as well as the recently signed Memorandum of Agreement between FAO and IFAD, provide some evidence of that commitment. The group identified a number of recent global events such as the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development, the New Partnership for African Development and the G8 Summit in Evian which offer real opportunities for collaboration and which GFAR needs to explore to further its own development and agenda. The group nevertheless noted with some concern the current instability at the level of the GFAR Secretariat in terms of funding and human resources endowment, especially as the secretariat plays an important facilitating role for the implementation of GFAR programmes.

While the group views the current situation as regular and normal threats often associated with every new process, it identified and proposed a number of ideas as building blocks for a long-term funding strategy. These include: (1) broaden the funding base for running the secretariat as well as for the implementation of stakeholder-led initiatives, (2) improve transparency in the allocation of financial resources across regions, stakeholder groups and thematic priorities, (3) encourage cost-sharing approaches for inter-stakeholder activities and platforms, (4) improve donor support coordination, (5) explore possibilities for innovative mechanisms to improve staffing at the secretariat including Associate Professional Officers, visiting experts and volunteers.

Finally, preliminary pledges of support were made by FAO, IFAD, the European Commission, Italy, Canada (CIDA and IDRC), the Netherlands and France. Future pledges are expected from Germany, Switzerland and Great Britain.

9.7 Private Sector

Unfortunately no participants attended the private sector stakeholder meeting, despite active participation of the private sector earlier in the sub-plenary on SMEs. There was, however, a well-attended full-day private sector seminar prior to the FARA General Assembly that made a series of recommendations from the African private sector perspective, which were presented and further discussed in FARA. In view of the key role played by the private sector in development, the importance of better engaging the private sector at all levels from NARS, through the Sub-Regional and Regional Fora, to GFAR is critical in order to benefit from the mutual advantages of closer collaboration between the private sector and GFAR. It was suggested to host a virtual debate on how to increase and advance the involvement of the private sector as a key stakeholder in GFAR.

As a commercial entity, the private sector has a strong interest in their customers (input suppliers, finance institutions) and suppliers (processors, supermarkets), which particularly relates to research support in this
context for SMEs, as well as farm production enterprises themselves, and such research may be more socio-economic or policy oriented than technical. It would thus seem appropriate to organize workshops at the sub-regional level to bring private-sector agri-business representatives together with Farmers’ Organizations to review research needs in support of input supply, marketing and credit, and how they could play stronger roles in NARS, RF/SRF as well as GFAR. The concept of such workshops was endorsed by conference participants, and could be a key part of SRF programmes supported by GFAR over the next three years.

10 Concluding Remarks

One notable feature of the conference was the opportunity given to all participants to evaluate and rate GFAR 2003 in terms of the overall organization, the content, appropriateness and value of the sessions, the timing and time utilization including length of the conference and time split between presentations and discussion. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to comment again on main gaps and new priorities that GFAR should address. In general, participants’ responses were favorable, with the majority of respondents rating many aspects of the conference as good or very good. While the technical substance of the conference was rated high, the unsatisfactory aspects were: a lack of crucial documents in other languages such as French and Spanish; session time changes during the conference; inadequate translating facilities during sub-plenary sessions; and poor chairing of some sessions. Gaps and new priorities were, as expected, similar to those identified by stakeholder and roundtable group sessions.

The GFAR 2003 Organizing Committee formulated four expected outputs during the planning stages of the conference: (1) identification of potential global partnership programmes or inter-regional activities; (2) consolidation and strengthening of partnerships and alliances amongst GFAR stakeholders; (3) development of strategies for improving information exchange and knowledge sharing amongst GFAR stakeholders; and (4) definition of a framework (identification of essential elements) for the GFAR business plan for the triennium 2003-2006. A careful analysis of the conference events as they unfolded indicated that these outputs were realized. In the first instance, all of the potential partnership programmes discussed during the five sub-plenary sessions moved closer to development and implementation, and these sessions, as did other discussion platforms, provided a singular opportunity for consolidating old alliances but with opportunities for new institutions and individuals to become active partners. It was also very clear that during the special side event on a global agenda for information communication management, some new innovative approaches were presented which need to be captured for future use. Finally the ideas put forward by speakers and chairs of plenary sessions, the comments, recommendations and conclusions of individuals through the evaluation mechanism, of the heterogeneous roundtable group or the homogenous common-interest stakeholder groups not only constituted essential elements of the next business plan, but in some instances touched on programmatic contents. Our analysis suggests therefore that the expected outputs of GFAR 2003 were realized, as was confirmed by the conference participants who, when asked how well the conference objectives were met, responded as follows: 10% very well, 52% well, 28% satisfactorily and 10% did not respond.

GFAR 2003 was concluded by a closing ceremony presided over by the Senegalese Minister of Agriculture Mr. Habib Sy. The first of the four speakers during this ceremony was the GFAR Chair, Mohammad Roozitalab, who expressed his gratitude to all those who in one way or another contributed to the planning and implementation of the conference. In their closing remarks, representatives of GFAR facilitating agencies, Rodney Cooke from IFAD and Isabelle Alvarez from FAO, highlighted the historical ties between GFAR and the two agencies, the current and future support to GFAR and its constituent regional and sub-regional organizations. In his closing statement, Mr. Habib Sy, reiterated the important contribution of agriculture to sustainable development, describing it as the real engine of development that not only contributes significantly to food security, but also provides reliable income through exports. However he pointed out that a key condition for development to occur is for science and technology to be fully harnessed and rationally utilized for the benefit of communities, especially in developing countries. Hence the real value of the GFAR conference is that it has brought scientists and their development partners together to identify needs and use appropriate science and technology innovations to find solutions.