2\textsuperscript{nd} Triennial GFAR Conference

22 – 24 May 2003
Méridien Président Hotel, Dakar, Sénégal

\textit{Linking Research and Rural Innovation to Sustainable Development}

\textit{Keynote Addresses Session Speech}
Let me start by saying what a great pleasure it is for me to open this meeting, it’s a great honor and I’m grateful to the organizers for having asked me to chair this first session: it’s also a great personal pleasure for me.

This is a meeting at which I see many colleagues and many dear friends with whom I have been involved in Agricultural Research in Africa for many years and I think the same applies to most of you.

This is indeed a gathering of not just the GFAR family but also very much of all of those who are involved in research, research policy and research implementation.

The fact that we gather here today has to do with the fact that we gathered three years ago in Dresden. It is the second meeting of GFAR, it’s the second official forum that we celebrate today and that will have conducted sessions during the next two days.

The aim is to prioritize, to prioritize research, to discuss funding, to discuss partnerships, to consolidate collaboration wherever needed and to find innovative ways with the issue of dealing with agricultural research in a wide sense.

Agricultural research not just in Africa, but right throughout all those areas that are either under demographic pressure, under ecological pressure or in some way need this very important investment of agricultural research.

And I think this one thing that has changed very much since Dresden and that is that today we live in a world which is even more explicitly globalized than before.

We are very aware of the fact that agriculture is not something that can happen in isolation. Farmers all over the world feel the pressures of global markets. They also feel and stick the opportunities that global markets present. They feel the necessity to comply to new trade standards, to comply to new regimes. While at the same time safeguarding the economic situation and combating hunger.

And we also live in a world that since Dresden has become even more urbanized; more people and above all, more relevant decision-makers live in cities and agriculture is increasingly seen as a difficult sector, as a sector that leads to conflicts, about trade regimes, and a sector that has not, unfortunately, since Doha, found its solutions.

Agricultural research is a key factor in all this, and it’s not the most easy one because, of course, I think we all stand to a scrutiny in a way for not having delivered or for not having made research more effective.

You and I, we’ve all been to very many meetings about agricultural research, we’ve all talked about new green revolutions and we still are not there.

That’s very much what this meeting is about and today’s session and tomorrow must help us to get this new partnerships going, to get this new impetus for agricultural research in a world which, as I said, is increasingly urbanized and increasingly globalized.

This morning’s session will consist of two parts: the first part will be three formal addresses, to which I will come in a minute, and then after the break we have some possibilities for more discussion.

Now, with respect to the session this morning, we first have a welcome address, as you have and I presume you all have the program that came in this folder, we first have a welcome address by our friend Roozitalab, the Chair of GFAR and after that we have two formal addresses which set the scene for a discussion.

So if you agree, without a do, I will give the floor to Mohamed to speak to us on behalf of GFAR.

Thank you
Louise Fresco
ADG, FAO