2\textsuperscript{nd} Triennial GFAR Conference

22 – 24 May 2003

Méridien Président Hotel, Dakar, Sénégal

Linking Research and Rural Innovation to Sustainable Development

Rapporteurs’ report to plenary on global issues & new GFAR business plan discussed in roundtable sessions

(Groups 1 to 4)
Introduction

There was general consensus on the potential value-adding role that can and should be played by GFAR in supporting agricultural research and development in the world. There was the need however for clarity of the role of GFAR vis-à-vis those of other fora, lower down in the geographic hierarchy (e.g. continental Agricultural Fora (e.g FARA), the SROs and other layers of operation), to avoid duplication and confusion.

Priority roles for GFAR were agreed as follows:

- GFAR should be seen as a platform for Representation and Advocacy for agricultural research at the global level.
  - Links with political groupings such as G8, Africa Union (and other continental bodies)
  - Inter-Academy Council, and Academies of Science
- GFAR should be a FORUM to bring agricultural scientists and stakeholders from different regions of the world together, to focus on major issues of global importance that influence agriculture.
- GFAR should promote sharing of information and experiences across the regions of the world.
- GFAR should raise funds and political support for the continental agricultural fora (e.g FARA)
- GFAR should “promote” Partnership Development across disciplines, across institutions and organizations and across regions and continents of the world.

Question 1: Should agricultural development activities include crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries sector, ...?

Answer: YES, but not as independent components (rather in an integrated manner)

Suggested strategies:

- Integrated, multi-disciplinary approaches
- Agro-ecosystem approach
- Interactions across components

Question 2: In what thematic areas should GFAR be promoting/doing more

Answer:

- Participatory approaches and agro-ecosystem analysis
- WEHAB thematic areas, and interactions across them
- Policy aspects
- Real long term agriculture research challenges

Areas in which GFAR should be doing less:

- Getting involved in implementation of research projects (Not consensus position)
- Focusing on single component issues in agriculture R&D
Question 3: The top 5 priority ARD issues for GFAR
Answer:

- Genetic Resources Management and Biotechnology
- Natural Resources Management and Agro-ecology
- Commodity Chains and Underutilized Species (from production to consumption)
- Policy Management and Institutional Development
- Sustainable Financing Mechanisms

Question 4: Is GFAR doing enough, in terms of efforts to build capacity of RF/SRF and CSOs?
Answer: Some progress has been made, but more needs to be done. Suggestions are given below:

- GFAR should be seen to be proactive in creating the necessary environment for stakeholder (including CSO) engagement and belonging in GFAR activities.
- Specific criteria for certain activities to include need for CSO and/or PS partnership, and in some cases leadership (special grants could be created for this type of partnership)
- Equity in attention and focus across regions. This should include the language issue as well as recognition of special situations across regions.

Question 5: Strategies for improving horizontal communication among stakeholders.
Answer: Good progress being made. More focus required in this area. Some suggestions:

- GFAR should facilitate access to telecommunication in different regions of the world, for research and development. This can be done through advocacy at the highest level.
- EGFAR and the website should have links to the SROs and ROs that are members of FARA (e.g. FARA).
- Other regional organizations could apply to be members of GFAR, and to have their information channels linked to GFAR website.

Minority View

GFAR should gradually phase out its involvement in implementing, coordinating or commissioning of field research projects, such as currently being done through the GPPs.

All such activities could be done in the context of the regional organizations (e.g. FARA) or sub-regional organizations. GFAR should focus on the higher level issues and partnerships with governments and inter-governmental agencies.

GFAR could also work directly with the regional and sub-regional organizations so that the latter could be implementing and/or managing projects, with possible financial support through GFAR.