



Global Forum on Agricultural Research

MINUTES OF THE 3rd GFAR SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Washington, October 27, 1998, 17:45 – 19:30

1. OPENING ADDRESS

The meeting was opened by Dr. Abelmajid Slama, Chairman of the GFAR Support Group (GFAR-SG). In his introductory speech, after having welcomed the 29 participants who attended the meeting, he emphasized the following points :

- Significant progress has been made since Brasilia :
 - Thanks to the efforts of the GF-SG members, enough funds have been secured for the recruitment of the NARS Executive Secretary and for a Secretary for the NARS Secretariat.
 - Since 1 August 1998, the NARS Secretariat is operational in FAO, Rome.
 - The GF-SC Secretariat is also fully operational and has carried out consultations with the GFAR constituencies.
- Programs of work and budget have been developed by the 2 secretariats and will be presented by the respective secretariats
- The expectations from this meeting are :
 - Open discussion on the two programs of work and budget
 - Expression of possible support to the two programs of work and budget
 - Suggestions on how to mobilize new GFAR supporters

The agenda of the meeting was approved without any change.

2. REPORT ON THE NARS-SC AND GF-SC MEETINGS

Dr. R.S. Paroda, Chairman of both GF-SC and NARS-SC, also welcomed the participants and indicated that he was personally very pleased by the progress made since Brasilia and also during the meetings which took place over the last couple of days in Washington. He then summarized the main achievements as follows :

- Selection and appointment of Fernando Chaparro as the first NARS Executive Secretary
- Improvement of the representativeness in GFAR memberships
- Further clarification of the roles and functions of the two secretariats
- Encouragement and support to GFAR received from the Regional and sub-Regional Fora

- Preparation of detailed and realistic programs of work and budget
- Appreciation that Germany has offered to host GFAR 2000 and good starting up in both the scientific and technical preparation of the meeting

Dr. R.S. Paroda concluded his report by thanking the GFAR Support Group members for having allowed this new initiative to materialize. He however emphasized the two challenges which still have to be faced by the GFAR Support Group :

- « Unidentified incomes » in the budgets
- Identification of GFAR support group members outside the conventional CGIAR donors (in order to become truly « global »)

3. PRESENTATION OF THE GFAR PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET

Alain Derevier, Executive Secretary of the GF-SC, made a brief presentation of the program of work and budget of the GF-SC Secretariat. He underlined that the World Bank contribution to the GF-SC Secretariat cannot be used to pay for activities carried out by WB staff (e.g. missions, contracts to develop EGFAR). He therefore pleaded to get external financial support for the GF-SC Secretariat to be able to operate.

His presentation was followed by a brief introduction of the program of work and budget of the NARS Secretariat by Dr. F. Chaparro, the NARS Executive Secretary, and by a more detailed presentation of the content by Dr. C. Hoste. A few participants raised questions for clarification but no real discussion took place on the proposed activities and budgets presented by the two secretariats.

4. STATEMENTS BY THE MEMBERS OF THE GFAR SUPPORT GROUP

The statements made by the members of the GFAR Support Group are summarized and presented in alphabetic order.

Canada (Agriculture and Agri-Food) : Dr. Brad Fraleigh made an offer to facilitate an increased and more diversified Canadian participation to GFAR. He mentioned the interest expressed by the Canadian Agricultural Food Research Council during the preliminary discussions he held with them. He requested more information on GFAR and its NARS component. Regarding the representation of the North American ARIs in the GF-SC, he agreed to consult with the US representative of the GF-SC to explore ways of building a North American Regional Forum.

Canada (IDRC) : Dr. Ola Smith mentioned that IDRC is currently considering the request made by the GF-SC Secretariat for further support for EGFAR. He also indicated that there are good prospects for IDRC to support the NARS Secretariat in 1999.

CGIAR : Dr. Stein Bie, on behalf of the CDC and as Director General of ISNAR,

indicated that GFAR can count on the scientific and technical support of the CGIAR. The IARCs in general are definitely interested and willing to assist in building new partnerships. Individual centers may also identify specific areas in which they would like to collaborate more directly with GFAR. ISNAR is a special case as they financially support the Senior Advisor of the NARS Secretariat and are willing to continue to provide specific services to facilitate the launching of GFAR and of the NARS Secretariat at no or marginal cost.

European Union : Dr. Alain Darthenucq from DGXII indicated that a support of the European Commission (DGXII) to the GF-SC Secretariat of ECU 83,000 – 84,000 for EGFAR, the Electronic Global Forum on Agricultural Research, is under consideration and would most probably materialize soon. He mentioned that potential support for the activities of the NARS Secretariat, especially for strengthening the regional and sub-regional fora, could best be sought from DGVIII. He advised the NARS Secretariat to arrange for a meeting with the new Director, Uwe Werblow.

France : Dr. Gilles Saint-Martin indicated that France is a strong supporter of GFAR and financially supports the GFAR Executive Secretary. He also mentioned that France will most probably continue to support the operations of the GFAR Executive Secretary in 1999 at the same level as in 1998 (i.e. approx. US\$ 26,000).

Germany : Dr. Jochen de Haas indicated that BEAF, the German Advisory Service for Development-Oriented Agricultural Research, has already appointed Mrs. Dr. Reinhild Ernst to work on the Coordination of GFAR-related activities, in particular the preparation of GFAR2000. He also mentioned that, most probably, Germany will also contribute to the publication of the proceedings of GFAR2000. Regarding the possibility to get a German APO to support the secretariat of one of the regional fora, he indicated that the competition is very high and that all posts for 1999 are already filled.

IFAD : Dr. Abdelmajid Slama reported that an IFAD contribution for the NARS Secretariat of US\$ 100,000 has been confirmed both for 1998 and 1999. He was also pleased to report that the discussion between IFAD and the Italian Government for using part of the Italian Trust Fund managed by IFAD for the NARS Secretariat has been successful for 1998.

Italy : Dr. Gioacchino Carabba confirmed an Italian contribution to the NARS Secretariat of US\$ 200,000 through the Italian Trust Fund managed by IFAD for 1998. He also indicated that he hoped to use the same procedure and to speed it up for obtaining the same level of support for 1999.

Netherlands (The) : Dr. Mrs. Teresa Fogelberg was pleased to confirm that her government has officially approved a contribution of Dfl. 100,000 (approximately US\$ 50,000) for 1999 and the support of two APOs for the NARS Secretariat. She mentioned that one of the APOs may come from a developing country. She also informed the participants that, following up on a request made by APAARI to FAO, a third APO position has been approved by her government to support the Executive Secretary of

APAARI.

In addition to these statements, Bob Hart, Director of the “**Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources Management Collaborative Research Support Program**” (SANREM CRSP) financed by USAID, indicated that he is willing to explore ways of collaboration with GFAR. One of the most obvious possibility is in the fields of information exchange and database on NRM. SANREM is also active in the Global Farming Systems Network and collaborates closely with FAO and the Netherlands in the preparation of an international conference on agriculture and land management to be held in Maastricht in September 1999.

Finally, a few GFAR Support Group members could not attend the meeting but have confirmed their commitments. This is the case of **Belgium** which indicated that BEF 4,000,000 (approximately US\$ 120,000) have been approved to support the NARS Secretariat in 1998 and 1999. Similarly, the **World Bank** has confirmed its 1999 contribution at the same level as for 1998, i.e. US\$ 120,000 for the NARS Secretariat and US\$ 80,000 for the GF-SC Secretariat for a total of US\$ 200,000. Additional World Bank funds may probably be made available to contribute to the preparation of GFAR2000.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Dr. Abdelmajid Slama thanked all participants for having attended the meeting in spite of their heavy, and sometime conflicting, agendas. He considered the meeting very successful. First it confirmed the increasing interest of the international community for GFAR. Second, excellent suggestions were made to identify new partners to contribute to the implementation of the agendas of both GF-SC and NARS Secretariats. Third, the dialogue between the participants was very positive and new ideas for enlarging the composition of the GFAR Support Group emerged. It is now the responsibility of the two secretariats to follow up and explore these different opportunities.