12TH GFAR STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

27 October 2002

Manila, Philippines

1. Introductory Remarks

GFAR Chair Raj Paroda welcomed all stakeholders present at the meeting. Referring to the NARS Committee meeting held the previous day, he highlighted the need to strengthen the role of the NARS Committee and the importance of advancing inter-regional activities.

He acknowledged the GFAR Secretariat for being able to handle very well the transition phase of GFAR and called for a more enhanced interaction of the secretariats of both GFAR and the regional/sub-regional fora. He then introduced and welcomed the incoming GFAR Executive Secretary, Dr. Ola Smith. He appreciated the offer of ISNAR to second a senior staff member in GFAR. Dr. Paroda also expressed his concerns over further delays in the signing of the GFAR Multi-Donor Agreement (MDA) between IFAD and FAO. He also appreciated the efforts of Regional Fora in advancing the goal of GFAR.

The agenda was adopted and the minutes of the 11th GFAR Steering Committee meeting were approved without any modification.

2. Progress since May 2002: From Rome to Manila

GFAR Officer-in-Charge JeanFrancois Giovannetti updated the members regarding various activities of GFAR since its previous meeting in May 2002.

He cited the launching of three projects whose development is being facilitated by GFAR, namely: (1) DURAS Project funded by MAE (France); (2) Strengthening CSOs participation in Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) expected to be funded by European Commission/DG AIDCO; and (3) Global-RAIS Project funded by European Commission/DG-Research.

He also reported that three Facilitation Units are currently operational, namely: (1) Direct Sowing, Mulch-based and Conservation Agriculture (DMC) in Montpellier, France; (2) Underutilized Species based in Rome, Italy and (3) Coconut in Penang, Malaysia.

JF Giovannetti also acknowledged the support provided by IFAD through a Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) to GFAR Secretariat for its facilitation function in the following thematic areas: (1) Rural Innovation for the support and development of SMEs; (2) Rural Knowledge Systems; and (3) Livestock Health and Production.

While JF Giovannetti concluded that the GFAR Secretariat has a rather healthy portfolio of projects that will support a wide range of RF/SRF activities, he mentioned that GFAR still faces a worrisome financial situation for the basic metabolism of the Secretariat. He also emphasized the need to redefine and strengthen the role of the NARS Committee in the light of the regional priority setting exercise and the need to come up with a more systematic process of allocating resources to RF/SRF.

2.1. Discussion
ISNAR Director-General Stein Bie commended GFAR for promoting the involvement of other stakeholders in ARD discussions and not only those belonging to agriculture ministries and Government institutions. He mentioned that GFAR is a better “listening post” and should be emulated at the regional level. He mentioned that not listening to stakeholders is a dilemma faced by many international agricultural research organizations. Philippe Vialatte also commended GFAR Management and the Secretariat for the work it has done despite the very challenging transition phase it has gone through in the recent past.

3. Global Partnership Programmes: Updates from the various Facilitation Units

3.1. DMC and the launching of the Montpellier Facilitating Unit

Fatima Ribeiro, DMC Coordinator, presented the Action Plan for the unit which focuses on (1) learning activities from local initiatives; (2) synthesis activities across case studies; (3) feedback/advocacy activities; and (4) information sharing activities. Of these four, the first and the last are identified as priority.

To date, the DMC Unit is conducting an inventory of existing initiatives by collecting documents and case studies in collaboration with partners it has identified. Case studies on DMC practices in Tanzania, Ghana, Pakistan, India, and Nepal are underway along with those in Paraguay, Bolivia, Brazil, Madagascar, South Africa, and other countries in Africa are in the 2003 pipeline. Partner institutions include SARI, African Conservation Tillage (ACT) network, FAO, GTZ, ICRA, CIMMYT, CIRAD, ICRA, RELMA/SIDA, Swedish University of Agriculture, and the Rice-Wheat Consortium. Other activities include the development of the DMC Website (http://agroecologie.cirad.fr/dmc/index.php) and participation in the Second World Congress on Conservation Agriculture to be held in August 2003 in Brazil.

3.2. Facilitation Unit on Underutilized Species

Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon, Coordinator of the Facilitation Unit on Under-utilized Species, apprised the members of the activities of the Unit. She reported that it was during the GFAR 2000 Conference held in Dresden, Germany in May 2000 that the establishment of an Under-utilized and Orphan Commodities Facilitation Unit was recommended. Thanks to BMZ (Germany), the Facilitation Unit was established and will operate for three years. It is now being hosted by IPGRI Rome.

The objective of the GFU (Global Facilitation Unit) is to establish a mechanism under the umbrella of GFAR which supports and facilitates the work that is undertaken on different aspects of under-utilized species world-wide at different levels by networks, agencies, organizations and others. It will cover the identification, assessment, improvement, development, sustainable use and marketing of these species for the benefit of local farmers and users. It will encourage the development of common tools and approaches that can be applied in different contexts and situations. It will facilitate the determination of priorities at a regional level and draw attention to bridge the gaps. It will also provide a common forum for discussion and suggestions for action. During a recent meeting, the members of the steering committee was confirmed and it was decided to call the unit "Global Facilitation Unit for Under-utilized Species" The unit will initially work on underutilized plant species only.

Since its establishment, some of the activities conducted have included an evaluation and planning workshop of the GFU for Commodity Chains, elaboration of a draft program for an international workshop in 2003, development and distribution of a fact sheet on the Unit, participation in a satellite event on the occasion of the 9th session of the CGRFA, information exchange with the FAO-convened SARD Initiative and liaising with NGOs working in development cooperation. Current activities
include the development of a database of “who is doing what”, the preparation for the international workshop on Underutilized Species in 2003, and the development of its own website. A presentation of the website by Mr. Paul Bordoni followed, highlighting various aspects to be covered.

3.3. Coconut Research for Development Programme (PROCORD) by Pons Batugal

Dr. Pons Batugal of the Coconut Research for Development Programme (PROCORD) shared with the participants of the meeting the PROCORD Collaborative Programme. Established by the APCC (Asian and Pacific Coconut Community), BUROTROP (Bureau for the Development of Research on Tropical Perennial Oil Crops), COGENT (International Coconut Genetic Resources Network) and IPGRI (International Plant Genetic Resources Institute), the primary aim of PROCORD is to generate and bring benefits to coconut stakeholders, especially resource-poor coconut farmers and consumers as well as to promote the sustainable development of the coconut industry.

Through the programme, he mentioned that returns to coconut farmers and coconut-producing countries would be improved. The programme hopes to achieve this goal by (1) promoting the development of improved coconut varieties, controlling the spread of pests and diseases, developing coconut-based ecosystems, improving processing techniques, producing high-value coconut products, and studying the socio-economic issues affecting the coconut sector; (2) strengthening and stimulating partnerships among stakeholders of the coconut community to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of global coconut research efforts; (3) enhancing access to information and documentation and disseminating research findings; (4) generating training opportunities for researchers and technicians to improve their knowledge and skills; and (5) providing effective coordination of research and generating institutional and funding support to the programme.

Six priority research areas were identified, with two areas assigned as lead responsibility to each of the three organizations, namely: genetic resources and improvement and socio-economics and policy support (COGENT); agronomy and coconut-based farming systems and crop protection (BUROTROP); and processing and marketing (APCC). COGENT will initially coordinate the programme for the next three years and a PROCORD Secretariat is being established at the IPGRI Regional Office for Asia, the Pacific and Oceania in Serdang, Malaysia.

3.4. Discussion

Ensuing discussion focused on the innovative nature of GPPs citing that these partnership programmes were developed without GFAR providing any funds (although provision of catalytic funds would hasten the development of GPPs and facilitate the achievement of their objectives) and were purely based on stakeholders “buying into” process. Participants proposed that the process of developing GPPs be documented, highlighting its multi-stakeholder dimension as well as stakeholders’ willingness to initiate an activity amongst themselves. Another characteristic of this GPP which was recognized by the SC members is that it is a collection of various decentralized initiatives which when put together provides further added value. It was also mentioned that GPPs complement the activities that will be carried out under proposed CGIAR’s Challenge Programmes.

It was also agreed that coordination among the three Facilitation Units (i.e. DMC, Underutilized Species and Coconut) be ensured and supported by the GFAR Secretariat. Among the activities that will be carried out include: (a) development of a common format in designing their respective website; (b) use of GFAR logo; and (c) dialogue among the three Facilitators electronically through EGFAR and face-to-face (e.g. during GFAR meetings) sharing of experiences in coordinating the GPPs, among others.

As to GFAR’s representation to Steering Committees of these Facilitation Units, GFAR Chair Raj Paroda opined that GFAR representation could be through its RF/SRF so as to ensure a more decentralised approach.
Other suggestions in terms of next steps with the GPPs include: (a) documentation of success stories which will also highlight NGO-led activities as well as those that foster inter-regional collaboration; (b) use of the term GPP Facilitation Unit instead of Global Facilitation Unit; and (c) explore sustainability mechanisms of GPPs and ensuring long-term commitment of stakeholders to implement these programmes.

4. Information & Communication Management activities of the GFAR Secretariat

Fulvia Bonaiuti of the Secretariat updated the members on GFAR’s ICM activities. Her presentation was articulated in three parts, following the three main EGFAR tools (or pillars) that facilitate the dialogue among stakeholders.

The first EGFAR pillar is that of Communication composed of sections, namely: the Discussion Fora, where one can propose and launch an electronic discussion; the Newsletter which also contains all previous issues of GFAR Newsletter, in pdf and html, (since April 2002) formats and is sent through a GFAR stakeholders distribution list; and the Web Information Resources. The latter contains related links, other discussion fora hosted in other sites, as well as the EGFAR search engine which offers users to select the format of information i.e., whether pdf documents, html pages or data stored in the database. This is meant to simplify and better target the document search. Moreover, it was highlighted that in the near future it will be possible to search also in websites under the EGFAR Web Ring which will include all regional agricultural information systems (RAIS).

This webring utilizes XML technology (developed in collaboration with the Infosys team) and thus leads to the second pillar of EGFAR: Decentralization. It was underscored that the XML technology is already being used in EGFAR Stakeholders section when retrieving information on EFARD and all European countries. It was added that in fact all European data are stored in Infosys database and EGFAR can show them by a query to the Infosys server that sends information in XML format. This technology was chosen as it gives real possibility to decentralize information and allows Regional Fora to better manage it.

The third pillar of EGFAR is the Back Office system that will be operational by January 2003. This system allows users to update/send information to EGFAR. This information can be data (events, institutions, related fora) or page contents (Stakeholders and Research Partnerships sections). Data information can be updated/sent by any user through a form interface that helps user to classify data while page contents can be modified just by some categories of users (Stakeholders and Facilitation Units teams) through a password identification.

4.1. Discussion

The presentation stimulated the interest of all participants. Stakeholders appreciated GFAR’s effort to decentralize information and provide them the opportunity to manage their own information, which also enhances their visibility and responsibility in information management. This makes EGFAR to be a true stakeholders’ tool and not just another website. Donors also expressed their interest in the presentation as it demonstrated practical output in ICM activities of GFAR. This also stimulated their interest to support EGFAR.

RF/SRF also saw a real possibility for them to develop their own Information System, based on readily available technologies (mostly "open source") . They also expressed their appreciation to GFAR for its willingness to build a stakeholder-led global information network.

5. Progress reports and future plans by GFAR Constituencies

5.1. Regional Fora
On behalf of the NARS, Mohammad H. Roozitalab (AARI NENA) presented the various activities of the Regional Fora based on the NARS Committee meeting held the previous day. These included: several expert consultations on agricultural biotechnology in the Asia Pacific region, including the region’s intent to establish a “Biotechnology Consortium for Asia-Pacific” with APAARI serving as neutral facilitator/supporter for the establishment of such a consortium; preparations for the development of Regional Agricultural Information System (RAIS); completion of a regional priority setting (RPS) exercise in several regions and how this feeds into the development of inter-regional partnership programmes (e.g., Cotton among APAARI, AARINENA and CAC regions); planned activities of FARA to catalyze innovation and change in agricultural research in the region in collaboration with three African subregional organizations (i.e., ASARECA, CORAF/WECARD and SACCAR); facilitating the process of hemispheric integration in Latin America through the promotion and development of a regional agenda in key priority research topics; and CAC Regional Fora initiatives to collaborate with Luxembourg and US universities in grape wine and (winter) wheat and field crops research. He also echoed the request of RF Chairs for enhanced support to the establishment of RF Secretariats particularly in CAC and AARINENA regions, and emphasized on more active involvement of GFAR Secretariat for programme activities.

5.2. IARCs

ISNAR Director-General Stein Bie reported on some of the activities of the CG centres in several regions. He spoke about the meeting on the developments related to Challenge Programmes (CPs), i.e., Water and Biofortification CPs, as well as others in the pipeline (e.g., genetic resources, African CP).

Allain Derevier (CIRAD) thanked Stein Bie for his contribution to GFAR and noted that progress has been made in building the GFAR-ISNAR relationship. He cited some recommendations from the ISNAR EMPR that part of ISNAR’s work should be done through GFAR. He mentioned that GFAR should not intervene in the CG business on this but should, nonetheless, endeavour to strengthen CGIAR-GFAR collaboration at the RF/SRF level.

5.3. Farmers’ Organizations

Chebet Maikut (IFAP) reported that a meeting of the IFAP Science and Technology (S&T) Committee was held as a side event during the 37th World Farmers Congress held in Cairo in May 2002. During this meeting, farmers’ organization shared information on ARD issues and their views on how to strengthen FOs’ participation in agricultural research at various levels, i.e. from local to global. He maintained that there is a need to rebuild the research-scientist-extension-farmer relationships so that farmers can ensure that research is user-oriented and relevant to their needs. Participants also welcomed the GFAR-facilitated proposal on Strengthening CSOs in ARD and they have put forward their suggestions to enhance the proposal.

Also the S&T Committee, whose membership is open-ended, constituted regional focal points. He mentioned that they are currently looking for volunteer organizations to serve as focal point in other regions/sub-regions. He also reported that informal discussions are being held regarding the participation of FOs in the forthcoming GFAR 2003 Conference. He mentioned that the planned activities and modus operandi of the focal points at different levels will be presented and discussed in the next IFAP Executive Committee meeting on 5-7 November 2002 in Geneva, Switzerland.

In closing, Maikut cited some major constraints in mobilizing FOs. He mentioned that low internet connectivity and lack of telephone lines hinder the effective networking activities of farmers organizations. He also pointed out the generally low level of awareness on ARD issues, lack of adequate capacity for greater involvement and participation of farmers in ARD issues at local to global levels.

Discussion on Farmers’ Organizations
Raj Paroda inquired as to the TOR of IFAP S&T Committee and asked for the activities it has conducted up to this point. He underscored the need to assist CSOs in their participation in RF/SRF. FARA Vice Chair Adama Traore shared with the members the result of the Bamako CSO workshop where CSOs themselves identified their representative to the CORAF Board. He expressed that in all sub-regional organizations, legitimate representation of CSOs should be ensured.

5.4. NGOs

Monica Kapiriri of the NGO Committee apprised the members of the Committee of the activities of the NGO group. She cited that the NGOs are generally in agreement of the decision of FARA to identify a new NGO representative to the regional fora, following their complaint against the appointment of Florence Wambagu. She then introduced Mariam Jorjadze of ELKANA Biological Farming Association in Tbilisi, Georgia as the NGO alternate representative to GFAR Steering Committee. It was reported that the NGOs are working towards reaching out to wider civil society community not only at the global level but at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. NGOs, thus, view the GFAR-facilitated project on strengthening CSOs in ARD as an important means towards this direction. Ms. Kapiriri outlined some NGO activities including those related to capacity and awareness building among civil society organizations at the national to global level as well as the mobilization of small-scale farmers particularly in Southern Africa.

5.6. Advanced Research Institutions (ARIs): EFARD and North America

Speaking on behalf of the North American ARIs, Russ Freed briefly reported that the North American Forum on Agricultural Research (NAFAR) is still trying to involve the USAID in the partnership process. He expressed that with the new leadership in the GFAR Secretariat, they see more involvement of North America in the future activities of GFAR.

Willem Van Vuure, for the European ARIs, spoke about the outcome of the EFARD 2nd General Meeting that took place in May 2002, which was preceded by a consultation process at the European level, through the National Fora, aiming at identifying inputs for the development of European or Global Research Initiatives. At the same time, EFARD also has worked with GFAR and the Regional and Sub-Regional Fora to collate the European ‘supply’ side and the developing country ‘demand’ side. The resulting inputs have been clustered into 19 proposals related to the major themes identified by GFAR and EFARD.

He mentioned that the purpose of the 2nd EFARD General Meeting was to develop concrete outcomes for each of the Global Research Programme Initiatives, i.e. development of complementary actions based on the 19 EFARD Action Programme Proposals for the EU-NFP-instruments, the GFAR-Global Partnership Programmes and the CGIAR-Challenge Programmes.

Over 200 participants confirmed the critical role of various sciences, especially Agricultural Research for Development (ARD), education and training in meeting development challenges, and recognized that Europe has extensive and valuable expertise in ARD. They also fully recognized that knowledge, competence and expertise is shared among stakeholders both in developed and developing countries, and pledged to increase cooperation between the North and the South.

He also reported that the concept of the European Research Area (ERA) was adopted by the European Union, underlining that ARD should be an integral component of the three ERA domains, and emphasized the contribution of the European ARD knowledge base in formulating European development and science policies. The crucial role of the European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD) at the policy level was also cited as important in carrying out the ERA.

Next steps will include the design and implementation of an action plan for the 2002-2005 period that will facilitate and support: a) the development and strengthening of National ARD Fora in Europe, b) the formulation of European ARD Action Programmes, and particularly Networks of Excellence or
Integrated Projects within the 6th Framework Programme of the European Union, c) the reinforcement of partnerships with partner regions and organizations, and d) an increasing scientific and financial contribution from Europe to GFAR Global Partnership Programmes, CGIAR Challenge Programmes, and regional networks, among others.

Discussion on ARIs

Van Vuure confirmed the involvement of EFARD in the forthcoming GFAR 2003 Conference and has reported that Dr. Alain Derevier will be Europe’s representative to the Conference Working Group (CWG). Derevier, in turn, mentioned that Van Vuure was nominated to be Europe’s representative to GFAR.

Giovannetti noted the support provided by the European Commission to the GFAR-facilitated project aimed at strengthening CSOs in the ARD process. He added that the Latin America and the Asia component can be submitted to USAID.

5.7. Donors

Philippe Vialatte from the European Commission (EC) expressed that the donors are fully aware of the current difficulties of the GFAR Secretariat in terms of budget and staffing issues, which is presently in the period of transition. He emphasized, however, that donors are committed to support GFAR and that they are looking forward to the signing of the Multi-Donor Agreement (MDA).

5.8. Private agribusiness sector

No representative from the private sector group attended the meeting. It was suggested that private sector representative to GFAR be rotated among the private sector representatives in the Regional Fora. It was agreed that APAARI and FORAGRO will provide a list of private sector groups which can be contacted and requested by the Secretariat to take part in the GFAR process. Also GFAR Secretariat can organize a meeting among private sectors involved in agriculture and explore the possibility of developing a collaborative programme with them. Genetic resources management and biotechnology is already one of the important themes of GFAR which might interest the private sector.

6. GFAR-2003: The General Conference in Dakar

Samuel Bruce-Oliver apprised the members of the progress made regarding the preparations for the GFAR 2003 Conference. Members of the Conference Working Group and their Terms of Reference (TOR) as well as the expected outputs of the Conference were presented. It was conveyed that the definite dates for the 2003 Conference are 22 –23 May, preceded by the FARA General Assembly (19 & 20 May, 2003) and Senegal Agricultural Day (21 May).

The theme (tentative) of the conference is "From Regional Priorities to Global Action: Linking Research and Rural Innovation to Development". Bruce-Oliver reported that the programme will start in the morning of Thursday May 22nd with an official opening ceremony chaired by the Senegalese President with invited VIPs, possibly FAO DG Jacques Diouf, former US President and Nobel laureate Jimmy Carter and former S. African President Nelson Mandela) speaking. There will also be welcome and introductory speeches by the GFAR Chair and by an IFAD official. After which, a plenary session will be held with a keynote address by an invited speaker on the main theme followed by discussions. After lunch on day one, the GFAR Chair would present a status report followed by discussions. It will end with roundtables or working groups to discuss two or three sub-themes, followed by a welcome dinner. Working groups/roundtables will continue throughout the morning of Day two and report to plenary will take place after lunch. Closing programme takes place in the evening of day two.
The budget for organizing GFAR 2003 was estimated to be about $300,000 ($200,000 for funding the participation of NARS partners from developing countries and $100,000 for the funding of the conference proper). The timeline for the preparation of the GFAR 2003 detailing what needed to be accomplished before the official announcement of the conference in December 2002 was also presented.

6.1. Discussion

Ensuing discussions after the presentation focused on the theme, duration of the conference and funding. Following the discussion, it was agreed that the overall conference theme would be "Linking Research and Rural Innovation to Sustainable Development." It was suggested that the duration of the conference should be lengthened to three days (May 22 - 24, 2003) to allow for detailed discussion of all the issues, for side events as well as for sharing of successful experiences among RF/SRF. The invitation to the suggested VIPs should be expedited since they are all very busy people and should be offered maximum opportunity to accommodate such invitations into their schedules. Fund raising should start as soon as possible.

7. Towards a Business Plan Strategy for GFAR

Oliver Oliveros of the GFAR Secretariat presented the document Towards a Business Plan Strategy for GFAR. The paper was aimed to serve as a discussion paper for the development of GFAR Business Plan and Strategy 2003-2006. The document highlights the challenging role of GFAR in terms of bringing together stakeholders in a forum where there is a diversity of views and stakeholders needing to foster greater collaboration around areas of common interest.

Against this backdrop, the paper asserts that it is important that the GFAR Secretariat ensures that it caters to the needs of all its stakeholders in terms of facilitating their involvement in the area of strategic thinking and research partnerships as well as providing institutional support to NARS and their RF/SRF. Making the GFAR Secretariat more responsive to the demands of its stakeholders is one of the key points emphasized in the presentation. This implies: i) redefining the role of the NARS Committee, ii) supporting a more focused set of activities anchored on the demands of Regional and Sub-regional Fora, and iii) a more flexible and enhanced facilitation function by the Secretariat. Sustained financing of the Secretariat and the provision of catalytic funds will be indispensable if the Secretariat is to carry out its facilitation function and assist stakeholders in implementing their regional priority activities.

7.1. Discussion

Subsequent discussion focused on the minimum basic staff requirements of GFAR Secretariat as well as what can be the mechanisms for sustainable financing. The re-organization of the GFAR Secretariat was generally endorsed by the GFAR-SC members. The need to enhance Monitoring, Reporting and Resource Mobilization role of the GFAR Secretariat as well as the need to have flexible staffing for it to be able to more effectively respond to the demands of RF/SRF and issues resulting from the regional priority setting exercise were also recognized.

Other suggestions put forward by the members of the Steering Committee included that GFAR may obtain a minimum overhead from the projects it will be facilitating. There were also suggestions such as exploring the possibility of having GFAR sponsors in the same way that the CGIAR, for instance, has its sponsor agencies. While it was agreed that the ideal scenario would have been to move towards having its activities funded by its stakeholders, i.e., each NARS contributing to its Sub-regional Forum, the Sub-regional Forum in turn contributing to its Regional Fora, and the latter contributing to the Global Forum. Meanwhile, members recognized the merit of exploring the possibility of asking for membership fees based on the capacity of each NARS to contribute (which is the case in APAARI and FORAGRO) or by providing in-kind contribution such as the case of the current NARS Senior Fellow from Gambia, secondment of Senior Officers from ARIs (such as the case with CIRAD) and IARCs,
and APOs such as the existing case of Italy and earlier that of the Netherlands. Other possibilities proposed included approaching the private sector and having RF/SRF pay their own travel costs to GFAR meetings, at least for their alternate members.

In regards to reinforcing NARS Committee, GFAR Chair requested Ndiaga Mbaye to prepare a short discussion paper as to how NARS Committee can be more of programmatic in nature. This can be followed by an electronic discussion among NARS Committee members. Derevier suggested that, for instance, NARS Committee could focus on RF/SRF specific need based issues while GFAR-SC can focus on more global issues.

8. Signing of Memorandum of Agreement

This agenda item was dropped, because although it was anticipated that the document would have completed its clearance processes within the two institutions concerned, FAO and IFAD, the clearance processes had not been completed within FAO. RF/SRF leaders expressed some concern over the delay, and GFAR Chair Paroda proposed that in view of general consensus and importance of the matter, a letter signed by the RF chairs and IFAD as Chair of the GFAR Donor Support Group (DSG) could be sent to FAO Director-General to express this concern, and request for a rapid conclusion of the process.

9. Dialogue with CGIAR Chair and Executive Secretary

GFAR-SC members briefly met with CGIAR Chair Ian Johnson and Executive Secretary Francisco Reifschneider. Alluding to CGIAR’s participation in the Rio +10 Summit held in Johannesburg, Mr. Johnson conveyed the general feeling that agriculture has again been brought back on global agenda. It was noted by Mr. Johnson and Mr. Reifschneider that there is a need to have an agile network of scientists and development practitioners working together. They also noted that CGIAR’s Challenge Programmes are being designed to work along these lines. Reifschneider specifically thanked GFAR for its paper on “Strengthening Civil Society participation in Global ARD”, for its participation in the CGIAR Executive Committee meeting and for working in partnership with various CG Centres.

10. Conclusion of the Open Session

The meeting was concluded after a brief ceremony during which incoming GFAR Executive Secretary, Ola Smith presented a plaque of appreciation to outgoing GFAR Chairman Raj Paroda in “recognition of his invaluable contributions to the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR)”.

Closed Session


The effective management of GFAR’s transition phase was commended by the members of the GFAR Steering Committee.

Chebet Maikut (IFAP) stated that efforts should be made to look for ways to ensure the sustainability of GFAR and the Secretariat. Supporting Mr. Maikut’s suggestion, Alain Derevier reiterated France’s
support to GFAR through the Programme DURAS which is expected to be implemented early before mid-2003. He mentioned that as a source of operational funds for GFAR project overhead can only be an interim solution and is not sustainable. He mentioned that part of the strategy is to consider having financial or in-kind contribution coming from GFAR stakeholders such as through secondment of staff to and from RF/SRF. He also urged the GFAR Donor Support Group to closely look into this issue.

Philippe Vialatte commended GFAR and underscored the need to develop and implement a sustainable funding strategy for GFAR. He also spoke of the possibility of seeking contribution from RF/SRF and seeking donors (and perhaps among CG centers) who are more inclined to support GFAR Secretariat’s core budget.

Mohammad Roozitalab expressed that it is imperative to prepare and pursue both a short and long-term strategy for GFAR targeting specific donors who might be more inclined to support GFAR.

12. GFAR management issues

12.1. Introduction of new GFAR Executive Secretary

GFAR Chair Raj Paroda introduced to the members the new GFAR Executive Secretary Dr. Olanrewaju Babatunde Smith. He informed that Dr. Smith joins GFAR from the International Development Research Centre (IRDC) in Canada, where he has served as a Senior Manager in the Environment and Natural Resources Management sector for the past 13 years. He replaces Dr. Fernando Chaparro who left GFAR in February 2002. Members welcomed Dr. Smith and wished him all the success in this challenging assignment.

12.2. Changes in the stakeholder representation in GFAR Steering Committee

Ms. Monica Kapiriri of Environment Alert in Uganda will be the NGO representative to GFAR-SC with Ms. Mariam Jorjadze of ELKANA Biological Farming Association in Georgia as her alternate.

Private sector representative to GFAR-SC will be rotated among the private sector representatives in various Regional Fora. APAARI and FORAGRO will provide a list of private sector representatives who can be contacted and requested by the Secretariat to take part in the GFAR process. GFAR Secretariat was requested to organize a meeting among private sectors involved in agriculture and explore the possibility of developing a collaborative programme with them. This is already covered in the proceedings earlier.

12.3. Election of new GFAR Chair and Vice-Chair

Following a closed discussion among the Chairs of RF/SRF held the evening preceding the GFAR-SC meeting, NARS leaders nominated Dr. Mohammad Roozitalab of AARINENA as GFAR Chair. This nomination was seconded by Dr. Marcio Porto of FORAGRO and approved by the members. Subsequently, name of Dr. Porto was recommended as Vice-Chair of the NARS Committee and was unanimously endorsed by the members.

Following the closed discussion among stakeholder representatives to GFAR-SC, Willem Van Vuure of the Netherlands was elected as GFAR Vice-Chair for an interim period of one year. Mr. van Vuure is also the European representative to the GFAR SC.

The GFAR Management Team will be composed of the GFAR Chair, the GFAR Vice-Chair, the NARS Vice-Chair, the GFAR Donor Support Group Chair, and the GFAR Executive Secretary. All members congratulated the new management team and wished them all the success in this challenging tasks.

13. Other matters
GFAR representation to the CGIAR Executive Committee will be rotated on a yearly basis among the five Regional Fora. FARA will follow AARINENA as GFAR representative to the CGIAR ExCo next time.

14. Concluding remarks by the GFAR Chair

Dr. Paroda thanked everyone present for supporting GFAR over the years. He expressed his appreciation to the GFAR Secretariat and all GFAR stakeholders for their support and wished the new management team of GFAR all well. He appealed to all stakeholders present to continue providing their unrestricted support to GFAR.
## Annex 1

### List of participants

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<th>NAME</th>
<th>CONSTITUENCY/ORGANIZATION</th>
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