13th Steering Committee Meeting  
26 October 2003  
Nairobi, Kenya

Minutes of the Meeting

A. Open Session

I. Introductory Remarks

GFAR Chair Dr. Mohammad Roozitalab welcomed all stakeholders present at the meeting. He started by acknowledging IFAD and FAO for their fundamental support during GFAR’s difficult cash flow situation. He briefly outlined the most important GFAR event, i.e., the GFAR 2003 Conference which brought together some 400 participants from different stakeholder groups. Prior to this, GFAR Secretariat also organised a Pre-GFAR 2003 meeting of civil society organizations (CSOs) to assure a full participation and involvement of CSOs in GFAR business. The chair also cited the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in continuing their collaboration in supporting the Global Forum. He again mentioned difficult financial situation that GFAR is currently into but has expressed optimism that the situation will be resolved soon. He concluded by shortly highlighting GFAR’s role in the development of some Challenge Programmes (CPs), and how GFAR should, in the future, be more involved in shaping and monitoring these initiatives, as well on going with the development of new GPPs.

FAO-SDR Director Dr. Dietrich Leihner acknowledged GFAR’s work over the last period and mentioned that FAO believes that GFAR must occupy its place in facilitating agricultural research for development (ARD). He added that FAO will do its role in assisting GFAR in carrying out its mandate. Representing IFAD, Shantanu Mathur, on behalf of Dr. Rodney Cooke, also renewed IFAD’s support to the GFAR platform. He congratulated the GFAR Secretariat for work done despite the very difficult conditions in the Secretariat. He also highlighted the role of GFAR with respect to CPs and the global initiative. He recalled how once CGIAR looked at GFAR as a potential competitor but is now collaborating with GFAR in many of its activities. This, according to him, is a recognition of GFAR’s convening power.
Dr. Wim Van Wuure, outgoing GFAR Vice-Chair, thanked GFAR Secretariat for their commitment and dedication to GFAR under such difficult circumstances. Alluding to the discussion that took place during the NARS sub-committee meeting held the previous day, he mentioned that some changes might have to be introduced in the NARS Subcommittee and transform it into a “Programme Committee” in the light of GFAR’s future activities. He added that this would have to be further studied and discussed as it would also imply some modifications in the current GFAR Charter.

The Chair then presented the Agenda which was adopted and the minutes of the 11th GFAR Steering Committee meeting was approved with a slight modification introduced by Dr. Irmgard Hoesle-Zeledon, Coordinator of the Under-utilized species Facilitation Unit.

II. Progress Report: from Manila to Nairobi

GFAR Executive Secretary, Dr. Ola Smith, updated the members on GFAR various activities since its previous meeting in October 2002 in Manila, i.e. those related to (a) facilitating systems governance operations; (b) engaging and interacting with stakeholders; (c) facilitating research partnerships; and (d) providing a medium of communication and knowledge sharing for GFAR stakeholders and their collaborators.

Dr. Smith highlighted interaction with CSOs, updating of the CSO database, the pre-GFAR CSO workshop, the identification of sub-regional CSO focal points and the building up of a CSO network in the Southern Caucasus sub-region. He also underscored the GFAR Secretariat-interim Science Council (iSC) collaboration in, among others, developing the CGIAR priorities and strategies, and development of some Challenge Programs, especially the CP on Unlocking Genetic Diversity in Crops for the Resource-Poor where GFAR was invited to join the Programme Steering Committee as a full-fledged member.

He also mentioned the GFAR Secretariat’s role in facilitating research partnerships specifically in the area of Rural Knowledge and Innovation Process, and post-harvest systems. Other important activities are related to the area of ICM, in which the Secretariat has an operational mandate was also highlighted in the report, particularly in assisting regional for a (RF) develop and manage their own Regional Agricultural Information System (RAIS).

Discussions

Following the presentation, the floor was opened for discussion. Members congratulated the Secretariat for the accomplishments achieved so far but have expressed concerns over current financial constraints.

On priority setting

Dr. Paroda opined that GFAR appeared to have been undertaken by the CGIAR in this area. He proposed that GFAR should, (a) take stock on the mechanism heavily facilitated by GFAR and (b) have follow-up activities to the regional priority setting (RPS) exercise, taking into account what has been done and what still needs to be undertaken (e.g. RPS exercise in the CAC and Pacific sub-regions). He stressed that GFAR should provide support to regional fora in the conduct of these follow-up exercise.
S. Mathur mentioned that while GFAR has facilitated a number of activities, its role was highly acknowledged. He, thus, suggested that GFAR’s role in facilitating these various initiatives should be communicated to as much stakeholders as possible and encourage them to be involved in the process. He also mentioned that GFAR should study to what extent should it be involved in the implementation of these activities. GFAR, he added, should identify research gaps and carve its niche in facilitating how these can be addressed without being seen as micromanaging or encroaching on the mandate of other institutions. He further added that GFAR should pursue and enhance its honest broker role.

Responding to Dr. Paroda’s concern on CGIAR priority setting, Dr. Smith explained that the CGIAR priority setting is, in fact, already a follow-up to the RPS exercise by a specific stakeholder group, i.e. IARCs. This, he added, is CGIAR’s way of doing its share in moving the agenda forward. He added that next steps would be defined in the GFAR Business Plan 2004-2006. Upon completion, he explained that stakeholders would be asked to go ahead and implement their share of the Plan. Dr. Christina Hoste, later on, supported this statement.

On Challenge Program

Responding the discussion on the role of GFAR in the Challenge Program, Dr. Coosje Hoogendorn (International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, IPGRI) described the process they followed in developing the CP on Unlocking Genetic Resources for the Poor. She stressed the important role GFAR played in the process, particularly in facilitating stakeholder involvement and in pushing for the capacity building agenda in the CP. She added that the participation of GFAR was appreciated by the CP so much so that it (GFAR) was invited to be part of the CP’s Programme Steering Committee. She also mentioned a GFAR Stakeholder Committee will be established to facilitate representation of the views of various stakeholders in relation to policies, strategies, research priorities, and program activities of the CP.

Dr. Philippe Vialatte (European Commission) informed that within EC, a working group was established to work on the Challenge Programmes. This working group will also act as an advocacy group to encourage other donors to follow. He also added that the European Initiative on Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD) is also supporting the establishment of the GFAR Stakeholder Committee. He added that this Committee should be proactive and drive the process, especially on benefit-sharing and capacity building in the CP issues. He added that the EC will explore possible support to this Committee. He concluded by acknowledging the work done by the Secretariat and mentioned that the donor group is doing its role to put an end to GFAR’s current financial problem.

Farmer representative to GFAR Mr. Chebet Maikut (International Federation of Agricultural Producers, IFAP) mentioned that capacity building should feature prominently in all CPs. (He also mentioned that the project on strengthening CSO is long overdue). He added that there is a need to have a clear reporting and information dissemination mechanism on progress made with respect to GPPs. He also proposed that at a certain point, interface between CP and GPPs might have to be pursued as both are targeting similar stakeholder group. Dr. Hoogendorn mentioned that the CG would focus on the current four CPs and would monitor it closely and learn in the process. She added that the idea behind the CPs is to be able to open up and learn from lessons in working with broader stakeholder groups.

On GFAR’s political recognition

Speaking on behalf of EFARD Chair Dr. Enrico Porceddu, Dr. Christian Hoste mentioned that the G8, in its Evian Statement, recognize the important role GFAR plays in agricultural research for development.
He added that this is a political recognition of GFAR and mentioned that it is an important signal of the valuable work of GFAR.

**On ICM**

Mr. Maikut mentioned that information on ARD should be repackaged in a more utilizable form and in a way that would reach farmers since majority of them have constraints in accessing the internet. Dr. Giovannetti mentioned that an EGFAR Advisory Group would be established after the series of regional workshops to guide the development of EGFAR. Dr. Paroda acknowledged the establishment of the Advisory Group.

**III. Outline of the Business plan 2004-2006**

Dr. Smith presented outline of the GFAR Business Plan, 2004-2006. In his presentation, he focused on the process followed by the Secretariat in formulating it, highlighting the fact that the elements contained therein are all from the recommendations put forward by the stakeholders during the GFAR 2003 Conference held in May 2003 in Dakar, Senegal as well as some other items in the BP 2000-2003 which are still deemed relevant for GFAR. He mentioned that the document as it stands is by no means complete as there is a need to further involve stakeholders in the definition of the Business Plan, following the GFAR principles of subsidiarity, complementarity, additionality, adaptability, participatory decision-making, openness, transparency, inclusiveness and stakeholder commitment. The BP development would be achieved by holding a retreat composed of the GFAR Management Team, the executive secretaries of the RFs, one representative for each stakeholder group, and two so-called GFAR “old friends” who would have the essential corporate memory of GFAR. The presentation was concluded by outlining some immediate activities that would have to be accomplished and incorporated in the work plan of the GFAR secretariat.

**Discussions**

**On the BP**

GFAR-SC members generally welcomed the BP outline as presented. Dr. Paroda mentioned that the outline of the BP is very forward-looking and appears to be more achievable. He also supported the idea to highlight inter-regional collaboration as among the priority strategy that GFAR will adopt in the next triennium as this is an important niche of GFAR. He underscored the need to engage stakeholders in the process and proposed that GFAR should also organize stakeholder group meetings. He also asked donors to provide their suggestions to further improve the Business Plan. He also stressed the need to think more on the research prioritization process, and to have a clear indication on the way ahead for the next six months.

Mr. Mathur affirmed IFAD’s endorsement of the outline of the Business Plan as well as the process followed by the Secretariat in formulating it. He added that IFAD supports GFAR’s facilitation role,
especially on strategies that support pro-poor innovations such as Prolinnova and Rural Knowledge Systems initiative.

Dr. Leihner (FAO) opined that the BP outline as presented seems to integrate all activities that it is difficult to distinguish the role and activities of the Secretariat vis-à-vis the stakeholders. To avoid misunderstanding on the role of the Secretariat, he proposed that the role of the Secretariat be explicitly stated in the BP.

GFAR Vice-Chair Dr. Willem van Vuure clarified that the presentation was about the proposed process of developing the BP. He encouraged members to give their approval so that the Secretariat can proceed in the next steps.

Dr. Nurmatov, CACAARI Chair, was impressed with the BP outline presentation. He also offered some inputs in shaping the BP. He added that while it is good that GFAR is gaining some political recognition, he added that further information about GFAR will have to be disseminated in his region as its activities are unheard of in that part of the world. He also lauded the BP’s emphasis on inter-regional collaboration.

Citing the promotion of cotton network as example, he added that collaboration with other regions will be an important undertaking in CAC since they need to learn from other regions and also because expertise is needed in developing technologies in CAC countries. He also appealed for GFAR support in strengthening CACAARI.

**On the role of GFAR**

Mr. Mathur (IFAD) mentioned that perhaps GFAR should play a more catalytic role given the various initiatives put forward by stakeholders. He added though that this new role will require meeting some conditionalities. GFAR would have to be cautious on this as it would also require stakeholder “buy-in”. Dr. Ibrahim Hamdam (AARINENA) added that GFAR should be more instrumental in catalyzing inter-regional interaction, building on strengths and opportunities offered by each region. He also mentioned that GFAR might also be able to assist RFs in coordinating with donors and in exploring possible funding support to initiatives developed by them. He also acknowledged RAIS as a good potential tool for information sharing.

Dr. Leihner (FAO) cautioned the members to be careful in moving towards this direction, i.e., the Secretariat moving from facilitating to catalytic role since the latter function will require technical expertise which, at present, is not present in the Secretariat. He mentioned that while he sees no problem with this, stakeholders should be prepared to put this expertise within the Secretariat. Otherwise, it should remain as a facilitator.

Dr. Mark Holderness (CABI) acknowledged the value of GFAR as an impartial forum that brings together various stakeholders at the global level. He asked not to underestimate this process since it is very useful in catalyzing the development of ideas and processes. Speaking of stakeholder involvement, he proposed that GFAR take advantage of a global initiative aimed at assessing the role of science and technology in meeting the millennium development goals. He mentioned that while this initiative has established a strong connection between private sector and NGOs, GFAR’s involvement in this undertaking would be highly relevant.
**On inter-regional collaboration**

Dr. Jamil Macedo (FORAGRO) welcomed the proposal on inter-regional collaboration and mentioned that FORAGRO is ready and willing to work in partnership with other regional fora. He mentioned that NARS will play an important role in this regard. He cited that EMBRAPA’s LABEX, a tool for North-South collaboration via the exchange of research scientists, should be used as model for South-South collaboration.

This was seconded by Dr. Paroda and cited that a research network in cotton could also be a good candidate for inter-regional collaboration. He likewise pointed out that GFAR should support the development and implementation of Global Partnership Programs (GPPs) as it is GFAR’s partnership tool.

Dr. JF Giovannetti (GFAR Secretariat) mentioned that the current BP outline is a first step in the process of developing the BP and that nothing is cast into stone. He informed the body that during the NARS Sub-committee meeting, a healthy portfolio of ideas for inter-regional collaboration was put forward by RFs. He mentioned that what is needed is to come up with mechanisms on how to proceed with the next steps.

Dr. P. Vialatte mentioned that the transparent and open-minded process of developing the GFAR BP would provide stakeholders’ ownership of the document. Some of the proposed ideas for inter-regional collaboration can be incorporated in the BP. Dr. Paroda added that it would be important to let other regions know what is taking place in other regions so that appropriate linkages can be fostered.

Summarizing the discussion, Dr. Smith mentioned that while the BP is being completed, the GFAR Secretariat will continue to attend to its current set of on-going activities. RFs will have to play an important role in pushing for activities which they deem important and common to all regions, and the regular meetings of RF Executive Secretaries will be a good mechanisms to foster this process.

**IV. Updates on GPPs and pending projects**

The afternoon session was dedicated to a series of presentations to update the participants on some ongoing and pending GPPs and projects facilitated by GFAR. These include: (a) Outcome of the International Workshop on Under-utilised Species by Dr. Hoeschle-Zeledon of the Global Facilitation Unit for the Under Utilised Crops; (b) Progress with Prolinnova (Promoting Local Innovations) which focused on the Ethiopia Country Programme presented by Ammanuel Asefa of Agri-Service Ethiopia; (c) Updates and Future Plans on the GLOBAL.RAIS Project by Fulvia Bonaiuti of the GFAR Secretariat; (d) Programme DURAS by Dr. JF Giovannetti of the GFAR Secretariat; (e) pending GFAR projects on strengthening civil society organizations (CSOs) by Oliver Oliveros also of the of the GFAR Secretariat; and (f) Post-harvest systems initiative by Antonio Schiavone from the GFAR Secretariat.

**Discussion**

Meeting attendees commented progress made on the GPPs. They generally supported and expressed their optimism on the prospects of activities that are yet to be implemented.
On Global Facilitation Unit on Underutilized Species

Responding to the query whether the Under-utilized species GPP is not promoting specific species, Dr. Zeledon mentioned that in the survey they conducted among Southern NARS, respondents have listed down species at genus level. She reasoned that if they were to promote particular species, the list would be endless as there would be many would be locally relevant. As such, she mentioned that the Facilitation Unit is not promoting any particular variety but is supporting organizations that are working on under-utilized crop species. She likewise added that the Programme do not have a specific regional focus. She expressed their interest to build relationships with RF and make this relationship work.

On Prolinnova

One of the queries related to the Prolinnova initiative in Ethiopia was about the extent of partnership between NGOs and other stakeholder groups. Mr. Asefa mentioned that in the case of the Prolinnova-ProFleet (Promoting Farmer Innovation in Ethiopia), partnerships is among NGOs, farmers organizations, NARIs and universities. He added that the emphasis is how to make use of local knowledge on farming practices and livestock management through participatory technology development (PTD) and farmer participatory research, among others.

Dr. Fardous (AARINENA) proposed that the GFAR website should make available information/documentation on indigenous farming practices and other success stories which stakeholders can access as this will greatly facilitate regional exchange and interaction.

In his intervention, Dr. Holderness (CABI) explained the linkage between farmer-led initiatives such as Prolinnova on one hand and the external “formal” information pool held in institutions on the other. He mentioned that an initiative called Putting Knowledge to Work is aimed at addressing the interphase between the formal and informal knowledge systems.

On CSO projects in the pipeline

On Dr. Macedo’s query on how the geographic focus of certain projects is decided, Dr. Smith responded that it is inevitable that donors would have some regional preference. In some cases, donors do not favor a certain region and in such instances, GFAR would make use of the resources in filling in the gaps. This is the with CIDA. He reiterated that CIDA would be providing unrestricted, core funding to the GFAR Secretariat, and that part of it, he added, be used in supporting CSO strengthening in the Latin America and Caribbean region, since this region would not be covered by the CSO strengthening project proposed for EC financing. He also added that there are no predefined agenda in these projects as consultations with CSOs would be conducted later on to discuss with them their needs and together, design the set of specific activities that would be carried out in the projects.

Dr. Paroda expressed optimism that once the projects in the pipeline are implemented, GFAR would be in a better position to assist RFs. He added that in some of these projects, such as the DURAS Programme, NARS Subcommittee would be greatly involved. He mentioned, however, that in the preparations of these projects, very limited interaction with RFs have been carried out. He said this process would have to be remedied so we could move ahead as partners. He appealed that in the future, RFs would have to be involved from the beginning.

Dr. Vialatte (EC) responded that some of the projects presented, such as the CSO project proposed for EC financing, have actually undergone consultations. He also noted that several projects have built-in
competitive grant mechanisms. He mentioned that it would be important to make use of existing mechanisms and not to reinvent the wheel by introducing new systems. He also added that if donors would have regional preferences, then it would be GFAR Secretariat’s responsibility to balance this and make sure that it would be at acceptable level.

Dr. Smith pointed out that it was increasingly becoming more apparent that the NARS Sub-committee as well as the RF Executive Secretaries would be playing a more active role in ensuring that these portfolio of GFAR projects would be truly responsive to their needs. He added that it is important to respond to this and put in place a mechanism urgently.

**On post-harvest systems initiative**

On the view that that there was no clarity on the role of RFs in these global initiatives, Antonio Schiavone of the GFAR Secretariat clarified that several stakeholders present in the GFAR 2003 Conference. He added that regional representatives to the Steering Committee are to be selected in consultation with the RFs.

**V. Summary Report of 13th NARS sub-committee meeting**

Dr. Smith presented to the participants the main outcomes of the NARS sub-committee meeting that was held the previous day. He mentioned that RF are making good progress with their respective activities. He added that RFs supported the idea to enhance inter-regional collaboration and that role of the NARS Sub-committee given the future GFAR activities be revisited, exploring the option of moving towards a more programmatic role. This new role would have to be defined based on the GFAR Charter, which was proposed to be revisited as well. As such, it was agreed that a small group will be convened and will be charged with review, with the GFAR Management Team driving the process.

**VI. Closing Remarks by the GFAR Chair**

Dr. M. Roozitalab, Chair of GFAR, closed the open session by thanking all the participants. He expressed his deepest appreciation to the GFAR Facilitation Agencies, both FAO and IFAD, from which GFAR has received invaluable support, particularly concerning the latest cash flow break down. Also he acknowledged some European and North American countries as the regular donors of GFAR, among which Italy, the Netherlands, France, Germany and Canada. In mentioning the contribution given by the EC, Dr. Roozitalab seized the opportunity of addressing Dr. Uwe Werblow who is now retiring after serving for 35 years the EC. He then thanked the pillars of GFAR, all the Regional Fora. Looking at the future new challenges await GFAR. First of all he mentioned the building of the BP which will be the framework of the activities for the next three years. Also the GFAR Charter will be revisited taking account of all the Stakeholders consultations that were held during the last GFAR Conference. He then concluded his closing remarks by mentioning the portfolio of projects facilitated by the GFAR
Secretariat, and about to be launched in 2004, for instance, DURAS, which will allow to support Regional Fora activity through competitive grants and the CSO Project. Has a last remark he gave a special thanks to all the GFAR Secretariat Staff for its innovative approach and commitment, in spite of a stressful 2003 environment.

B. Closed Session

The closed session was opened by adopting the agenda. Due to some constraints affecting some participants the issue of vice chairmanship which was originally scheduled to be discussed in the section under “Governance and other issues,” was anticipated to the beginning of the session.

I. New GFAR Vice-chair

After a year of service as GFAR Vice-chair, Dr. Wim Van Wuure (advanced research institutions) turned over the position to Monica Kapiriri (NGO), current NGO representative to the GFAR Steering Committee.

In her acceptance speech, Ms. Kapiriri thanked the GFAR Secretariat for its support and explained the various reasons why it was so difficult for the NGOs to accept such position. She mentioned that the position signifies three things for them as CSOs. Firstly, and alluding to the NGO Committee’s decision to “freeze” their participation in the CGIAR process, she mentioned that accepting the position is an affirmation that NGOs are not disengaging in the ARD process. Secondly, as NGOs are considered as among the weak links in the ARD chain, they see the Vice-chair position as an opportunity to mobilize themselves and build their constituency. Thirdly, the Vice-chair position is a challenge for the NGOs as a stakeholder group to bring in their comparative advantage in the ARD process, so they can be treated the way they want to be treated. Ms. Kapiriri also mentioned that bestowing the position to the NGO group was a clear signal that GFAR believes in the value of CSOs and its commitment to ensure that their voice will be heard in the ARD process.

Regarding farmers organizations (FOs) representation to the GFAR Steering Committee, FOs was asked to consult amongst themselves and select their new representative to GFAR-SC.

II. Statements and reports from the stakeholders

Farmers organizations

Chebet Maikut (IFAP) claimed that during the World Farmers Congress held in Cairo in 2001 (?) participants endorsed IFAP’s continued participation to GFAR. He also mentioned that through GFAR, farmers’ voices are beginning to be heard in global discussions in ARD.
**NGO**

Ms. Kapiriri mentioned that since Dakar, not much have been done by the NGO group. She said that NGOs would push for the implementation of the action plan that they themselves have formulated during the Pre-GFAR 2003 CSO meeting. She said that they would also endeavour to identify and carry out initiatives in collaboration with other NGOs that are not currently involved in the GFAR process.

**ARIs**

Dr. Christian Hoste (CIRAD) recalled that from the beginning there are three seats allocated for ARIs in the GFAR Steering Committee— one each for North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific. However, by far, it was only the Europeans that have been active in the GFAR process, and there is a need to rectify this and bring on-board both N. America and the Asia-Pacific. He also mentioned that during the GFAR 2003 Conference, ARIs stakeholder group expressed that they were not comfortable with them being labelled as “ARIs” as the term itself appears to be a misnomer since even in the so-called “South,” there are exist some “advanced research institutions” as well, thus making the term “ARI” not an exclusive term for research institutions from the so-called “North.” For this reason, the ARI stakeholder group proposed not to use the term “ARIs.” He added that European “ARIs,” for instance, are grouping themselves as ARIs as well, thus qualifying them as a regional fora. He also mentioned that now that there are plans to involve research institutions in North America, it would also be high time to invite and involve China, Japan and New Zealand. Dr. Hoste also informed participants of the change of chairmanship within EFARD, i.e., from Italy to Switzerland. He added that the next European Forum meeting would be held in Switzerland in 2005.

Dr. Smith added that the discussion on the “ARIs’ transition to regional fora” was initiated by the group of ARIs which participated in the GFAR 2003 Conference in Dakar last May 2003. He mentioned that in the South, some strong NARS could be considered as advanced institutions, such as India, Brazil and China. In the case of China, Dr. Smith mentioned that the issue can be looked at from a different angle and that it can be invited to GFAR as an observer.

Alluding to Dr. Hoste’s reference to China, Dr. Paroda mentioned that although China was the first chair of APAARI, it is currently not a member of the RF. It withdrew its membership when member countries were asked to pay membership dues. He also mentioned that current membership of Taiwan to APAARI also hampers China’s participation in the fora. This notwithstanding, Dr. Paroda agreed on the proposal to invite China as an observer but also proposed that the same be done for Russia.

Dr. Roozitalab asked the GFAR Management Team to study the issue, and make recommendations on how to proceed.

Regarding NAFAR, Dr. Brian Harvey (University to Saskatchewan) pointed out that in the case of North America, there is no single group in the region that addresses ARD collectively despite the number of institutions working on ARD. He mentioned that these institutions are also not aware of GFAR and its activities. He also thought that there might be a need to form an organization that would oversee this process and that the GFAR Chair would sit in the meetings. He mentioned that had the AGM been held in Washington, this meeting of North American institutions could have been held as well. He stated however, that they would still try to bring together institutions involved in ARD in North America.

Dr. Cooke encouraged the North American colleagues to take these suggestions forward and work towards the activation of NAFAR. Along these lines, he mentioned that Canada’s Minister of Development Cooperation Susan Whelan is putting a very good emphasis on agriculture He mentioned...
that it is a good signal and timing to raise the issue of support to agricultural research to other institutions North America and elsewhere, e.g. USDA and USAID.

Dr. Leihner asked if agricultural societies, e.g. American Agronomy Society, can be tapped as an entry point and if this possibility has been explored. Dr. Harvey responded that they have not done since these societies are highly focused and are not involving CSOs.

Dr. Macedo opined that NAFAR should not only focus on Canada and the US but should also consider Mexico. He also added that PROCINORTE is already moving towards bringing together these three countries, and this can be a good entry point. He added that in 2004, FORAGRO will have its General Assembly which will also involve all “PROCIs” including PROCINORTE. It could be an opportune time to discuss the issue. Dr. Harvey agreed that they would be exploring the possibility of linking up with PROCINORTE under FORGAGRO as their entry point.

Donors
Speaking on behalf of the donor group, Dr. Philippe Viallatte (EC) congratulated the GFAR Secretariat for the work done so far despite the financial difficulties it continues to encounter in 2003. He mentioned, however, that the following year 2004 should be a more promising one and noted the increasing donor interest on GFAR. He encouraged the GFAR Secretariat to continue discussing with donors, share with them the Business Plan, and regularly inform them of GFAR’s activities including next steps in the preparation and implementation of the GFAR Business Plan. Also, he added that given the various projects under GFAR it would be important to use established procedures on competitive funding mechanism.

Private sector
There was no private sector representative present during the meeting. Dr. Smith cited difficulties GFAR is facing in engaging the private sector in the ARD process. He stressed the need for GFAR to define a clear strategy to engage this particular stakeholder group. He added that perhaps it could be more strategic to link up with small and medium-sized private sector companies, as compared to big ones which could be too ambitious. He also mentioned that possibility of inviting PS representatives from APAARI and FORAGRO to attend the next GFAR Meetings as observers. This proposal was supported by everyone present.


Dr. Smith presented a series of financial tables outlining the current financial situation faced by GFAR, and the foreseen budget for 2004 that should be able to cover the current negative balance and still have additional funds to implement planned activities in the future. He also mentioned that donors have pledged to support GFAR and that some important agreements are in the process of being (e.g. with France, Italy, and Canada).

He also once more acknowledged the critical role played by FAO and IFAD in ensuring that the GFAR Secretariat’s functioning in the previous months. This was highly recognized by the members of the
Steering Committee. Dr. Vialatte singled out the important role played by Dr. Leihner in facilitating the continued functioning of GFAR Secretariat within FAO. The latter suggested that GFAR should create in the future a safety buffer in order to guarantee essential payments (e.g., staff and others), and to avoid incurring debts.

Dr. Smith also recognized the willingness of some of the participants to the meeting to pre-finance their participation to the meeting.

Referring to GFAR Secretariat staffing issue, Dr. Paroda pointed out that GFAR Secretariat should stay lean and small to be able to keep personnel cost to the minimum. He added that more attention, and therefore, resources, should be allocated to reinforcing RFs and in supporting their activities. Dr. Smith replied that the GFAR Secretariat would need a minimum critical staff to be fully functional and operational, and assured Dr. Paroda that this would be achieved not at the expense of RFs.

IV. CGIAR intervention to the GFAR Steering Committee

Dr. Roozitalab and Dr. Smith welcomed to the GFAR Steering Committee Drs. Ian Johnson and Francisco Reifschneider, Chair and Director, respectively of the CGIAR.

The floor was soon passed on to them where both expressed appreciation for the work done by GFAR in the past years. They both acknowledged the role played by GFAR in developing some of the Challenge Programmes, as well as in its engagement with the Interim Science Council in some of its activities, including the CGIAR priority setting process. Dr. Johnson envisaged a tighter collaboration between CGIAR and GFAR in the future and pointed out how the two institutions could relevantly exchange experiences, particularly with regards to engaging with the private sector and with civil society organizations (CSOs). He also mentioned the World Bank-sponsored assessment on ARD at the global level and how GFAR could greatly contribute in this process. He also mentioned that the WB would explore various ways of supporting GFAR (since the instrument WB used to support GFAR in the past was time-bound).

Reacting briefly on GFAR involvement in the CP development, Dr. Coosje Hoogendorn (IPGRI) expressed their appreciation on the role played by GFAR in the development of the CP on Unlocking Genetic Resources for the Resource Poor, particularly in advocating for a more involvement of various stakeholders in the CP and in pushing for a stronger capacity building component of the CP. As a result, she mentioned, that the CP would be moving towards establishing a GFAR Stakeholder Committee under the CP and that a separate subprogramme on Capacity Building has been included in the CP.

V. Closing

After the intervention of the CGIAR chair and Executive Secretary the discussions rapidly reached the conclusions. The issue of reviewing the GFAR Charter, which was initially discussed in the morning session, was endorsed for further discussion by the GFAR Management Team. It was generally agreed that the Charter be reviewed, with the GFAR Management Team, overseeing the process.
The GFAR chair thanked all participants for their active participation in the meeting and the GFAR Secretariat for its invaluable work. He specifically thanked Willem van Vuure for serving as GFAR’s Vice-Chair (who then thanked GFAR in return and wished it good luck), and Dr. Uwe Werblow, who was retiring from the European Commission and who was not present during the meeting, for supporting GFAR since its early beginnings. Before finally adjourning the meeting, Dr. Roozitalab appealed to all stakeholders present to continue their invaluable support to GFAR.
## GFAR STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
26 October 2003, Nairobi, Kenya

### List of Participants

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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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