AARINENA Activity Report
2006/2007

Presented by Ibrahim Hamdan to:

GFAR Statutory meetings

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AARINENA MISSION

- To contribute to the enhancement of agricultural and rural development in the WANA region through fostering agricultural research and technology development.

- To promote the exchange of scientific and technical experience and information.

- To strengthen collaboration within and outside the region to achieve greater degree of self-reliance in food and agriculture.
AARINENA 10th General Conference adopted the following work plan for 2006/2007:

1-Strengthening Regional Agricultural Information System (RAIS):
- Enhancing AARINENA Web Site
- Publication of AARINENA Newsletter
- Implementation of RAIS Priority Projects and
- Publication of Success Stories

2- Networks:
- Supporting the activities of commodity networks (Date-Palm, Cotton, Olive and Medicinal & Aromatic Plants)
- Establishing New Networks on Water Use Efficiency and Biotechnology
- Support the initiative of the Global Crop Biodiversity Trust for the development of a Regional Conservation Strategy for the WANA Region

3-Support to the Global Post Harvest Initiative in linking farmers to market and strengthen Inter-regional Collaboration
Highlights of the Progress

I- Regional Agricultural Information System (RAIS)

Main achievements:

1) Website
   - Enhancement of Arabic version of the website in collaboration with FAO.
   - Developing the Western Asia Agricultural Researchers Information System.
   - Developing the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Webpage on the Website.

2) A survey conducted to identify the status of human resources in the region. The results indicated:
   a. Urgent need for technical training support (100% of the countries)
   b. Lack of qualified technical staff
   c. AGRIS Resource Centers are only available in 40% of the responding countries.
   d. Identifying the NAIS status within member countries
   e. Identifying Information Focal Units in member countries
3-Weaknesses

- Lack of the development and up-dating ICT systems.
- Low ICT awareness (income disparity, different attitudes toward ICT, competition, and duplication)
- Lack of clear and precise policy and strategy regarding the development of the ICT sector
- Lack of capacity building (Lack of investment and planning of training opportunities)
- Poor communications at the sub-regional level
4- Development of AARINENA-RAIS Information systems and information portals:

- The project on “National Agricultural Research Information Management System” (NARIMS) was developed in collaboration with Central Lab for Agricultural Expert Systems (CLAES) Egypt with the support of GFAR:
  - This project is a Web-based bi-lingual information system aimed at capturing and disseminating information on research institutions, researchers, publications, and projects.
  - It consists of:
    i. Front-end that enables data browsing and searching
    ii. Back-end that enables data management
  - It will perform at National Level
NERAKIN was developed in collaboration with FAO:

- It is a platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration for Agricultural Research and Development (ARD) for target groups and stakeholders on a regional level.
- NERAKIN is a Multilingual information system (Arabic, English, French, and Farsi).
- AARINENA will facilitate its implementation.
- NERAKIN Will perform at regional level with the focus on the thematic regional network module.
Near East and North Africa Rural and Agricultural Knowledge and Information Network (NERAKIN) is a platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration for Agricultural Research and Development (ARD) for target groups and stakeholders on a regional level in NENA.

LATEST EVENTS
Second International Conference of Economic Entomology: "Insect Pests and Their Impact on National Economy" [Egypt]
CWANA Second International Seed Trade Conference [Egypt]

LATEST NEWS
Dh53 million to spruce up date receiving centres [United Emirates]
Shoppers to feel pinch as dairy prices rise [United Emirates]

LATEST DOCUMENTS
[The withdrawal of the open seas fleet] [Morocco]
[Techniques and profitability of supplemental irrigation] [Morocco]
[Is the supplemental irrigation profit earning?] [Morocco]

LATEST PROJECTS
[Qatar]
Strengthening phytosanitary services in the Gulf Cooperation Council States [United Emirates]

NERAKIN is being spearheaded by FAO in collaboration with other supporting partners and contributing organizations which are:
Technical cooperation networks have become a generic model for the establishment of functional mechanisms for collaboration and enhancement of communication and exchange of experiences among different countries in the region and other regions.

Networks were found to reduce duplicative efforts among national institutions in several countries and to provide a cost-effective instrument for information exchange and institution building.
Highlights of Network Activities

1- Date-Palm Global Network (DGPN):

- Proceedings of Third International Date Palm Conference were published.
- The establishment of the Khalifah International Date Palm Award, which was officially announced by the UAE Ministry of Presidential Affairs (Decree No. 2/2007 dated 01/07/2007).
2- Inter-Regional Cotton Network in Asia and North AFRICA (INCANA): In Collaboration with APAARI and CACARI

- INCANA held an inter-regional traveling Workshop on Hybrid and BT Cotton in India in November, 2005 and held another traveling workshop on IPM in Syria, August 2006.

- INCANA held its third Steering Committee Meeting with the support of AARINENA & APAARI hosted by GCSAR, Syria, June 07:
  - Reorganized its technical working groups and
  - Prepared work plan for 2007/2008

- Participants from the three regions participated in these activities.
3- Regional Olive Network activities

- The olive GAP manual was completed and under publication.

- The Network jointly with ESCORENA published OLEA Information Bulletins No. 25 and No. 26 July 2007 on Olive.

- The network will jointly collaborate with ISHS to hold “VI International Symposium on Olive Growing”, scheduled for September 2008 in Portugal.
Networks Cont.

4- Regional Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Network Activities:

- The first annual meeting for MAP was held in Malta:
  - The meeting elected the chairman of the board and new secretary and reorganized its 4 technical working groups.
  - Prepared work plan for 2006/2007

- The network cosponsored the 12th International Conference and Exhibition in collaboration with FAO and the Egyptian Society for the producers, manufactures & Exporters of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants November 2006, Cairo-Egypt.
5- Regional Water Use Efficiency Network

- The establishment meeting held at ICARDA HQ November 2006;
  Selected a coordinator and technical working groups.
- adopted preparing regional ATLAS in collaboration with FAO that include:
  1- Irrigated areas at all scales of geographical distribution.
  2- Types and cultivated areas of major irrigated crops.
  3- Crop yields and water requirements per unit land area.
  4- Agro meteorological data.

- Proceedings of the Expert Consultation on WUE Network in the WANA region under publication by ICARDA
New Regional Networks

**6-Agricultural Biotechnology Network:**
- An expert Consultation meeting for the establishment of Regional Agricultural Biotechnology Network is planned 15-16\textsuperscript{th} of December 2007 at ARC Egypt with the support of GFAR, FAO and ICARDA.

**7-Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) Network:**
- A Concept paper for “regional Collaboration for Conservation and Sustainable Plant Genetic Resources in WANA” was prepared in collaboration with BI.
- The paper was distributed to all members and was posted on AARINENA Web for comments and suggestions.
- Comments & suggestions were incorporated into the document for adoption by the next AARINENA 11\textsuperscript{th} General Conference.
New Networks in the WANA Region

NERAKIN (FAO/RNE)

Biotechnology (ARC-Egypt)

PGR (BI-Syria)

Aleppo, Syria

Egypt
III. Interregional Collaboration

Collaboration with FARA

- AARINENA participated in the fourth Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) General Assembly, which took place in Sandton, South Africa from 10 – 16 June 2007

- One of the resolutions adopted by FARA General Assembly was to endorse the representatives of AARINENA North Africa sub-region to serve at FARA Executive Committee for the next three years

- The draft constitution for North African Sub regional Organization (NA-SRO) is ready to be adopted by the next AARINENA 11th General Conference on the basis of FARA Entebbe Declaration
Inter-Regional Collaboration (Cont.)

Collaboration with APAARI and CACAARI:

- AARINENA participated in APAARI general assembly and expert consultation "on agricultural innovations" held in New Delhi, November 2006.
- Cosponsored with APAARI and CACAARI the INCANA general assembly meeting in Damascus, June 2007.
- AARINENA participated in CACAARI Expert Consultation on Regional Research Need Assessment meeting held in Tashkent, March 2007.
Collaboration with ERA-ARD:

- AARINENA participated in the ERA-ARD Conference on ‘Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) in Europe’ Held in Brussels, June 2007; AARINENA is a member of the newly formed Southern Advisory Group (SAG) with other regional representatives participated in the first SAG meeting.

- SAG will enhance southern involvement with ERA-ARD by Providing information and advice to the ERA-ARD program about southern regional ARD policies and strategies.

- AARINENA Participated in the second SAG meeting that was held last October 2007 in Slovenia in which the terms of reference for the group was finalized.

- Provided the names of specialists in Food & Energy from WANA for participation in ERA-ARD project assessment.

- The Next SAG meeting will be held in Madrid in the first week of February 2008.
Global Partnership Program (GPP) for linking small producers to market:

- A workshop on the global partnership program on linking smallholder farmers to growth markets was held in Cairo September 2006, sponsored by GFAR and FAO. The meeting was attended by representatives AARINENA, APAARI, FARA and FORAGRO.

- The meeting elected an Interim Committee that include representatives of all Regional Fora to develop GPP for linking small producers to market.

- Preparation for regional success stories was initiated.
IV-Publications

**Newsletter:**

**Proceedings of meetings:**
- Proceedings of meetings, workshops and training courses were distributed and posted on AARINENA Website

**Success Stories:**
- 1-Production of Pasture Seeds in Hot Humid Gulf Climate to Re-vegetate Degraded Lands AARINENA pub:2005/1
- 2-Micropropagation and DNA fingerprinting of date-palm Trees of Saudi Arabia.
- 3-Revitalizing Community-Based Traditional Seed Systems in Yemen: Experience of an Outreach Seed Program”. AARINENA publication 2007/1.
Meetings (2006/2007)

AARINENA cosponsored the following meetings in collaboration with APAARI, GFAR, FAO, ICARDA & IPGRI

1. Harnessing Biotechnology and genetic Engineering for Agricultural Development in WNA Region, Cairo - Egypt 12-14 Feb., 2006
2. Network Coordinators meeting, Al-Ain, UAE 22 Feb. 06
3. AARINENA ICT-RAIS General Assembly, Amman-Jordan 26 April 06.
4. 10th AARINENA General Conference, Sana'a –Yemen, 25-27 June 2006
5. Advocacy workshop for AARINENA NARS leaders, Yemen 26 June 06
6. Cotton IPM traveling Workshop, Syria, 16-21 August 2006
7. Inter-Regional program for linking farmers to market, Cairo 11-15 Sept. 06
8. AARINENA Expert Consultation for WUE Network, ICARDA 26-27 Nov. 06
9. The 12th International Conference on Recent Trends in Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Egypt, November 2006
10. Regional Workshop on agricultural Information Systems for agricultural Research & Development Cairo-Egypt May 2007
11. Third INCANA Steering Committee Meeting Damascus-Syria 2007
VI-Future Activities

- Expert Consultation for the Establishment of Agricultural Biotechnology Network 15-16 December 2007, Cairo- Egypt
- AARINENA Executive Committee Meeting, Muscat-Oman 7th January 2008 in conjunction with
- ICT focal units training workshop, Muscat –Oman 8-10 January 2008
- Preparation for the third International Date Palm Exhibition at UAE (March 2008);
- Expert Consultation for establishing Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) Network, Damascus, September 2008
- AARINENA 11th General Conference and an Expert consultation on "Revisiting priority setting for the WANA Region“ September 2008
- Enhancement of New version of AARINENA Web site (English and Arabic) using Content Management System (CMS) with linkages to NARIMS and NERAKIN.
- Supporting and strengthening existing Regional Network activities
THANK YOU