



**Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East  
and North Africa (AARINENA)**

**AARINENA Progress Report  
(2006-2008)**

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***Submitted to  
AARINENA 11<sup>th</sup> General Conference  
Damascus, Syria, 12-14 October 2008***

**October 2008**

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## **AARINENA Progress Report (2007/2008)**

### **I. Introduction**

Established in 1985, the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA) is an autonomous body and a platform for agricultural research and innovation in the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region, created in accordance with the recommendations of the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> FAO Regional Ministerial Conferences. Its main goal is to act as an instrument of change for strengthening national and regional agricultural research capacities in order to reverse the downward trends in agricultural productivity and the deterioration of the natural resources.

AARINENA's Mission is to contribute to the enhancement of agricultural and rural development in member countries through fostering agricultural research and technology development and by strengthening collaboration among them and with the outside world. AARINENA endeavors to assist member countries in creating effective national agricultural research systems that serve the goals of sustainable agricultural development, as well as strengthening regional and sub-regional scientific collaboration. In accordance with its mission, the association has acted as a collaborator and partner with other relevant regional and international institutions and recognized by the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) as an important and formal regional association representing the WANA region in global research community.

This report intended to track AARINENA activities, tools and actions that achieved during 2006-2008 to strengthen cooperation among members and stakeholders. It describes and ensures the timely and successful implementation of the activities that planned to foster agricultural research and technology development among partners and members in the region. The 2006-2008 report includes a substantial progress on the Regional Agricultural Information System (RAIS), Regional Networks, AARINENA activities on Priority Setting, GPP for linking farmers to Market, and inter-regional collaboration. The report also includes the actions taken by AARINENA secretariat in response to the recommendations of the Executive Committee meetings, in addition to the recent publications, workshops, training courses and future plans.

### **II. AARINENA 10<sup>th</sup> General Conference**

The 10th General Conference of AARINENA was held in Sana'a, Yemen during the period of 25 to 27th of June 2006, under the auspices of His Excellency Mr. Abdel Kader Ba-Jamal, the Prime Minister of Yemen. The Conference was cosponsored by FAO, ICARDA, GFAR and IPGRI in Collaboration with the Agricultural Research & Extension Authority (AREA) in Yemen.

Representatives of 16 countries represented regional and international organizations as AOAD, APAARI, FAO, FARA, FORAGRO, GFAR, Heifer International, ICARDA, ICBA, IFAD, IFAP, IFPRI, IPGRI, and UNDP's attended the conference. The conference included four sessions devoted to the meeting's organizational matters, reports of AARINENA activities, inter-regional cooperation, network activities, administrative issues and work plan. In the first session, Dr. Ibrahim Hamdan- the Executive Secretary summarized the activities implemented since the 9<sup>th</sup> General Conference. Sub-regional representatives addressed the activities cosponsored by AARINENA in their areas. During the inter-regional cooperation's session, GFAR, IFAP, APAARI, FARA, FORAGRO, and IFPRI representative addressed their organizations activities related to inter-regional collaboration and partnership. Steps led

to the development of a regional conservation strategy for WANA region presented by Dr. Mohamed Zehni.

The four commodity crops networks coordinators (Date-palm, cotton, olive, and medicinal and aromatic plants) presented the networks' activities and achievements in the third session. It was emphasized that networks are a mean, not an end, in problem solving and is a tool for discussing collaborative and effective exchange of information and expertise. Dr. Mohamed Al-Attar highlighted the activities and progress of ICBA's Inter-Islamic Networks on Biosaline Agriculture, which include over 70 members. Status of the Global Partnership for linking Smallholder Farmers' to Growth Markets was reviewed by Dr. Rupert Best.

The Executive Secretary introduced the constitutional amendments, financial statement and the work plan for AARINENA and requested the approval by the conference. The conference approved the following:

- Article X-1 regarding the executive secretary appointment, by deleting the words; "from among the technical staff hosting the seat of the Association" thus making the appointment open to any competent staff from any member country.
- Reconfirmed approval of the AARINENA permanent seat being located at ICARDA's office in Amman, Jordan.

An audited financial statement for 2004/2005 was presented and distributed to all members. The 2006/2007 work program was adopted and empowered the newly elected executive committee to implement the activities that have already secured funds and are in progress. With regard to the initiative of the Global Crop Biodiversity Trust, the conference welcomes and supports the initiative of the Global Crop Biodiversity Trust for the development of a regional conservation strategy for the WANA Region. The 10th General Conference elected a new executive committee representing the sub-regions as follows:

- Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al Bakri (Oman), president and representative of Arabian Peninsula Sub-Region
- Dr. Ismail Muharram (Yemen), vice-president and representative of Nile Valley & Red Sea Sub-region
- Dr. Majd Jamal (Syria), member and representative of Mashreq Sub-Region
- Mr. Adnan Gibriel (Libya), member and representative of Maghreb Sub-Region

### III. AARINENA Work Plan

AARINENA 10<sup>th</sup> General Conference held in Sana'a-Yemen in June 2006 adopted the following work plan for 2006/2007:

- Strengthening Regional Agricultural Information System (RAIS) through:
  - Enhancing AARINENA Web Site
  - Publication of AARINENA Newsletter
  - Implementation of RAIS Priority Projects:
- Networks:
  - Supporting the activities of commodity networks (Date-Palm, Cotton, Olive and Medicinal & Aromatic Plants)
  - Establishing New Networks on Water Use Efficiency and Biotechnology
- Publication of Success Stories
- Support the ongoing Global Post Harvest Initiative (GPHI) in linking farmers to markets.
- Supporting the initiative of the Global Crop Biodiversity Trust for the development of a Regional Conservation Strategy for the WANA Region, with the widest country representation from the region.

## IV. Highlights of the Progress

### 4.1 AARINENA Executive Committee Meetings

AARINENA Executive Committee held the following three meetings after the 10<sup>th</sup> General Conference.

#### New Delhi Meeting, 8 November 2006

The first meeting after the 10<sup>th</sup> General Conference was held in New Delhi, India on 8 November 2006. The Committee discussed and recommended the following:

- Present the following amendments to the constitution to the next general conference for adoption:
  - The reference of the pronoun “he” in the Constitution Articles will be amended to “he/she” and “chairman” to “chairperson”.
  - Rule XIV of the general rules of procedures will be changed to: “amendments or additions to these general rules may be adopted by “a simple majority of...” instead of “a two thirds majority” to be in line with Article XII of the Constitution.
  - The term for Executive Committee members be for three years renewable once instead of two years.
  - To add one new member to the Executive Committee for the position of the “President” in addition to the five sub-regional representatives and the Executive Secretary.
  - Add three new members to the Executive Committee to include representatives of GFAR, CGIAR centers and civil society organizations.
- Recommends Pakistan representative, Dr. Mohamed Afzal to represent West Asia sub-region on the Executive Committee as an observer up to the next General Conference.
- Request Dr. Mohamed Roozitalab to serve as an advisor to the Executive Committee

#### ICARDA-Aleppo Meeting, 5 May 2007

In conjunction with ICARDA Presentation Day, AARINENA Executive Committee met in Aleppo, Syria at ICARDA on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2007. AARINENA Executive Secretary underlined the constitution amendments proposed during the last meeting in November 2006, in New Delhi, which included: increasing the members of Executive Committee by four members, and to hold the General Conference every 3 years. The Executive Secretary and Dr. Roozitalab were requested to draft the amendments into the articles of the constitution. However, the Committee discussed and adopted the followings:

- The meeting discussed revisiting priority settings and proposed the formulation of an expert group that will consist of 4-5 experts to draft a report on the priority setting activities in the region to be presented for the 11<sup>th</sup> General Conference.
- From a total of seven profiles, the committee selected two success stories on improvement of wheat production in Syria, and the outreach seed program in Yemen for publication in 2007.
- A concept note on Near East Rural and Agricultural Knowledge and Information Network (NERAKIN) prepared by FAO was presented. The committee approved the network taking into consideration that the network be linked, facilitated, and monitored by AARINENA while its implementation will be supported by FAO and GFAR; the activities of the network should be NARS driven.
- GFAR business plan presented and covered various steps for its preparation starting with 2006 triennial conference and ending to GFAR Donor Support Group for approval.

- The financial status of the association up to 30 April 2007 presented, and the status of annual membership fees showed.
- The next Executive Committee meeting will be held in Muscat-Oman, 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2008 in conjunction with the ICT focal unit's workshop training.

### **Muscat –Oman Meeting, 7 January 2008**

In Muscat-Oman meeting, held on 7 January 2008, the Committee discussed and adopted the followings:

- The progress report on AARINENA activities since the last meeting presented. The committee appreciated the progress achieved during this period and inquired about the absence of activities regarding Livestock. The Committee recommended that that AARINENA task force member Dr. S. Galal to attend ICARDA /IFAD expert consultation on small ruminant, the outcomes of this meeting to be reported to the 11<sup>th</sup> General Conference.
- The amendments on the constitution that was recommended in the last meeting in Aleppo were incorporated in the Constitution and General Rules of Procedures. The committee requested that these amendments be submitted to all AARINENA members 60 days before the 11<sup>th</sup> General Conference for adoption.
- Members of the committee indicated the need of the PGR concept note prepared by Dr. M. Zehni for such network for exchange of information among scientist working in the region who feels isolated. BI and GFAR representatives indicated that there are no funds allocated for this activity, however BI representative indicated the technical support for this regional initiative including collaboration with the Global Crop Diversity Trust. The committee recommended circulating a brief page summary to all member countries requesting their interest for hosting the proposed network secretariat.
- The committee reviewed the proposed North Africa Sub region Organization (NASRO) constitution and recommended to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AARINENA and FARA with respect to the content of the proposed constitution, and recommended to discuss this issue further in the 11<sup>th</sup> General Conference of AARINENA.
- The Committee agreed that the Near East Rural and Agricultural Information and Knowledge Network (NERAKIN) system that presented by FAO representatives, Dr. Rudgard and Mr. Majdi Latif, would be informally launched during January 2008, to the national Information Focal Units, and the Network would be formally launched in the 11<sup>th</sup> General Conference in Damascus.
- The Committee recommended contacting CGIAR Alliance recommending ICARDA to be the CGIAR representative member at AARINENA Executive Committee. As for the Civil Society Organization representative, it was recommended that the elected NGO representative in the WANA region serve as a member for three years followed by Farmers Organization representative.
- The committee approved the membership of Arab Society for Plant Protection (ASPP) on a reciprocal basis
- The Committee recommended holding the 11<sup>th</sup> AARINENA General Conference during the period of 20-22 of October 2008.
- The Executive Secretary presented the membership of financial status up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007. The report showed an increase in the country membership status compared to 2006 which resulted in an increase in the balance of the fund as compared to the balance in 2006 despite the increase in the activities expenditures in 2007

### **4.2 AARINENA Regional Agricultural Information System (RAIS)**

AARINENA, in co-operation with the GFAR established and developed a Regional Agricultural Information System (RAIS), to increase the effectiveness of the agricultural

research in the region, and to increase their abilities to reach the end-user. The RAIS would serve as an information repository and exchange mechanism at the regional level, aiming to strengthen, co-ordinate, and add value to initiatives by national programmes and those coordinated by regional and international organizations.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become an essential component for development, not only of the agricultural sector, but also of industrial, environmental, and service sectors as well.

Addressing the development of the agricultural sector through the enhancement of information and communication technology was put as an urgent priority for AARINENA. The formation of the ICT Steering Committee, which proved to be fruitful, launching a set of databases, and addressing the training needs are good examples of the continuous efforts of AARINENA to improve the abilities and enhance the capabilities of its member countries, to achieve sustainable agricultural development. There is no doubt that information system development requires intensive and integrated efforts by all countries to achieve the goals and objectives set by the steering committee. The fact that cannot be denied is that the development of the ICT sector must be backed-up and supported by political commitment of all members.

#### **4.2.1 AARINENA RAIS Activities**

##### **Regional Workshop on Agricultural Information Systems for Agricultural Research for Development, Cairo, 27-30 May 2007**

To assist information managers in developing an information strategy for their organizations and in establishing new structures and procedures for effective information management, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with AARINENA and Egypt National Agricultural Research Information Centre (NARIC) organized a regional training workshop on Information Systems for ARD. The workshop was held during the period 27-30 May 2007 with the participation of information management and networking specialists from Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Morocco, Sudan and Yemen, along with FAO and Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD).

The participants formulated three groups to discuss the constraints and themes on the development of national systems; advantages and disadvantages of options of the establishment of the regional network. During the workshop two important projects have been introduced to the participants: The first project was NERAKIN which was developed by the FAO/RNE.

The second project was on National Agricultural Research Information Management System (NARIMS) which developed by the Central Lab for Agricultural Expert Systems (CLAES). A training session relevant to the Arabic AGRIS Application Profile (AP) for indexing and cataloguing and inserting the appropriate metadata was presented which was aimed to improve the participants' knowledge on AGRIS-AP so that they could index publications and documents.

##### **AARINENA-RAIS representatives Participated in the E- Agriculture Week, Rome, 21-27 September 2007**

AARINENA delegation represented by Dr. Mohammad Sallam, Chairman of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Steering Committee, and Mrs. Taraneh Ebrahimi AARINENA Website Manager participated in the E- Agriculture Week held at FAO HQ in Rome from 21-27 September 2008 which was sponsored by GFAR and FAO.

Three main events took place during the meeting: ICM for ARD, Global Agricultural Information Network Development, and E-GFAR Taskforce. In the consultation meeting on Information and Communication Management (ICM) for Agricultural Research for Development (ARD), a new initiative on improving international information systems for agricultural sciences was reviewed and discussed. Six successful stories came from Egypt, Kenya, Ghana, Peru, Thailand, and Madagascar on agricultural information systems were addressed. Moreover, the achievements of the three working groups on management of information content, publicity and promotion, and capacity building were underlined, and the prospective to improve progress highlighted. The participants discussed and recommended the following priorities:

- Support of decision makers for ICM is the crucial element for success.
- Revise the procedure of preparing national strategies of information
- Establish new structure and procedure for an effective information management
- Boost meetings and dialogs among partners of agricultural information
- Strengthen institution capacity for information managers and specialists

The Global Agricultural Information Network (Web2 for Development) meeting highlighted an initiative on improving the Agricultural Information Network that aim to transforming the initiative into a dynamic and de-centralized network with participation of all stakeholders.

The E-GFAR Taskforce meeting reviewed progress made by the E-GFAR team, which was formed in 2006 in Thailand. The participants underlined the present status and future prospective of Regional Agricultural Information Fora in the Near East and North Africa, South and West Africa, Caribbean and Latin America. Mrs. Taraneh Ebrahimi presented a paper on status and trends of developing AARINENA website, while Dr. Mohammad Sallam highlighted trends of developing information and communication technology. The E-GFAR meeting discussed and adopted the following:

- Ensure that the E-GFAR is a comprehensive concept including all trends, and it is a neutral platform for exchanging information, as well as a model for continuous development of information and communication management.
- Imbalance financing lead to in-parallel development in agricultural information systems among regions
- Endorse appropriate strategy for publicity and promotion for developing agricultural information systems
- Capacity building of partners is a core element for developing information management
- Miss Viviana Palmieri elected as a chairperson of E-GFAR team

#### **4.2.2 ICT Steering Committee**

AARINENA-RAIS Steering Committee was established upon the recommendation of the participants of AARINENA Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Expert Consultation held in February 2003 at Cairo, Egypt. Representatives of the five sub-regions and representatives of AOAD, FAO, GFAR, and ICARDA are the steering committee members. The RAIS Secretariat has been hosted by the Agricultural Research and Education Organization (AREO) - Iran.

#### **ICT-SC General Assembly meeting was held, in Amman-Jordan, 25-26 April 2006**

The Second Information and Communication Technology Steering Committee (ICT-SC) General Assembly meeting was held in Amman-Jordan during the period 25-26 April 2006, to review the achievements of the ICT-RAIS and to introduce participants to the latest developments of the ICT in the WANA region. The participants discussed and adopted the followings:

- The Assembly elected new ICT Steering Committee members and chairman.

- Updated ICT-RAIS country profiles
- Working plan for the coming three years adopted as follows:
  - Identifying focal points in the member countries
  - Preparation of terms of reference for the concerned focal points
  - Use of GIS in improving data processing and data use
  - Consolidating the preparation of ICT national strategies and policies
  - Articulating outputs from the former steering committee particularly suite of tools for NAIS.
  - Thematic linkages with RAIS
  - Human capacity building programs
  - Measure impact of ICT on agricultural development
  - Advocacy issues.

#### **Fourth AARINENA-ICT Steering Committee Meeting, India, 10 November 2006**

In the framework of GFAR 2006 Conference, AARINENA - ICT Steering Committee meeting was held on 10 November, 2006, and attended by representatives of AARINENA sub-regions and Network Coordinators.

The participants highlighted the establishment of focal units in AARINENA member countries, and possibilities of improving National and Regional Agricultural Information Systems (NAIS-RAIS). Dr. Mohamad Sallam Chairman of the Steering Committee mentioned that official letters have been sent to the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) to encourage them to establish their focal units. The weakness of national agricultural information systems can affect RAIS and without a strong NAIS, a proper RAIS can't build. Terms of reference for the focal units were discussed and drafted. Mrs. Taraneh Ebrahimi, underlined kinds of support to be given to the regional networks, and indicated that some pages on the AARINENA website were especially designed for the regional networks. The participants agreed that AARINENA should act as a portal in the future, so all networks; members can upload their data directly on the web from their countries.

#### **Fifth AARINENA ICT-RAIS Steering Committee Meeting, Egypt, 29 May 2007**

In the framework of the workshop on Information Systems for Agricultural Research for Development, the Fifth AARINENA ICT-RAIS Steering Committee meeting was held in Cairo, Egypt on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2007. Representatives of the AARINENA RAIS-ICT Steering Committee from AARINENA 5 sub-regions and representatives of FAO, and AOAD attended the meeting.

Chairman of the Steering Committee outlined the progress made since Amman Meeting in April 2006. The achievements include: participation in the last Steering Committee Meeting and relevant meetings, prepare and revise ICT-RAIS work plan 2007-2009, prepare TORs of Focal Units and follow up their establishment with NARS leaders, focal unit within AREA-Yemen and ARC-Oman were established, prepare concept note for strengthening NAIS and RAIS, seeking support for training from donors, coordinate and follow up relevant training courses. Dr. Sallam addressed that lack of funds for implementing the prepared ICT-RAIS work plan and lack of proper interactions and responsiveness by NARS leaders and some of the committee members in the establishment of focal units were the main constraints. The meeting discussed and adopted the following:

- NERAKIN as a platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration for development in NENA region. AARINENA will champion its implementation and decide on the course of actions required.
- NERAKIN should focus on the thematic regional network module while NARIMS should focus on national level

- Feed information on NARIMS and NERAKIN to AARINENA-RAIS website and electronic versions of both reports to circulate.
- Provide member countries with beta copies for testing prior to implementation of NARIMS and NERAKIN.

### **ICT Nodal Units Workshop, Muscat- Oman, 8-10 January 2008**

Due to the fact that the main constraints affecting ICT/M and the building of efficient RAIS are weak national agricultural information systems in many of AARINENA member countries as well as inconsistency in information management, the ICT-RAIS steering committee has given priority to the formulation of National Information Focal Units as an important step to strengthen National Agricultural Information Systems (NAIS) in AARINENA member countries. The philosophy of having Focal Units, rather than focal points/persons, is to deal with a sustainable institutional body rather than individual focal persons.

The main tasks of the Focal Units are:

- To assist in the identification of respective NARS information needs
- To assist in the development of NAIS and RAIS in AARINENA member countries.
- To collect, organize, monitor and update information and make them accessible to AARINENA-RAIS.
- To assist in the improvement of national research and ICT policies and strategies within the scope of AARINENA-RAIS mission.
- To share skills, knowledge and experiences in the handling and management of information among national focal units.
- To represent the respective NARS in the AARINENA General Assembly meetings and relevant ICT/M national and regional events

AARINENA with support from FAO and GFAR organized the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Nodal Units Workshop, which was held during the period 8-10 January 2008 in Muscat, Oman, and hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. A total of 22 participants coming from 11 countries (Cyprus, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen), along with AARINENA President and Executive Secretary, FAO, GFAR, and ICARDA representatives were participated in the workshop.

The workshop included three sessions. In the first session, the participants identified the main strengths and weaknesses of their agricultural research information systems. Attempts to identify appropriate interventions to strengthen the information systems were outlined in the second session. In the third session, each of the participating national focal unit prioritized three interventions, and identified how they would intervene to strengthen their national information systems.

Discussion among the participants identified the following areas for intervention:

- Policy and Strategy development
- Institutional aspects in developing and strengthening Information Systems
- Identify stakeholders and beneficiaries of information systems, and their needs for information
- Managing content especially content generation, its sharing and effective use
- Changing the attitude and skills of people involved in information systems especially information systems managers. Meanwhile, building capacities and retaining staff trained in managing ICT would enable information systems
- Managing ICT infrastructure effectively especially bandwidth
- Attract greater investment in ICT would enable information systems in terms of both finance and human capacities

### 4.2.3 AARINENA Website

As RAIS Secretariat has been hosted by Iranian Agricultural Research and Education Organization, the secretariat collect information through National Information Nodal Points (NINPs) from sub-regional countries, manage and develop such information on all activities to the AARINENA web site.

AARINENA Website (<http://www.aarinena.org>) launched to be a gateway to as many information resources, to share information related to agricultural research and innovation for development, and to keep all interested scientists, researchers, and other readers informed about research and development. Access to web spaces of AARINENA partners those of the organizations with which we have or have had strong institutional linkages, formal partnerships, shared activities, agreements of any kind or significant exchange of information, is also possible through AARINENA website.

The new AARINENA website will be released in 2009 with the high content management capacity. It will include the Members area for the Focal Points to input news, documents and data, as well as the useful knowledge sharing tools as blogs, discussion Forums, and Wikis.

#### Future Website Activities

- Enhancement of New version of AARINENA Web site (English and Arabic versions) using a Content Management System (CMS).
- Identifying focal points in the member regional countries to exchange information through the new AARINENA website.
- Strengthening the Regional Agricultural Information System, through strengthening the National systems, using NARIMS & NERAKIN.
- Collaborating with Regional Networks and support them to have their own space on AARINENA Website and to add their contents.
- Enhance close collaboration with GFAR and other Regional FORA

### 4.2.4 Information platforms

#### 4.2.4.1 Developing the National Agricultural Research Information Management System (NARIMS)

NARIMS is another important Project in the Region, which has developed by CLAES in Egypt. The objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the ARC to develop, manage and apply a relevant and effective national agricultural information management system in support of agricultural development and food security policies

It enables Researchers and scientists to carry out research more effectively by creating access to research and intuitional information from the region and as well as by providing modern tools for the managing researchers information, agricultural research project, :plans, and other activities. NARIMS has four modules namely

- Agricultural Research Personnel
- Agricultural Research Institutes
- Agricultural Research Projects
- Agricultural Research Results and Publication

#### **4.4.2 Near East and North Africa Rural and Agricultural Knowledge and Information Network (NERAKIN)**

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.

The immediate objective of the Network is to strengthen the capacity of the Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Research Institutions for effective information management and knowledge exchange in support of rural and agricultural development in the region.

The ultimate development objective of NERAKIN is to enhance information and knowledge access and exchange within the region for ARD in Near East and North Africa, and at the global level. This network would provide mechanisms to strengthen, coordinate, and add value to national, regional and international initiatives in order to increase agricultural production and improve food security in Near East countries, and for the benefit of improving performance of farmers and agrarian businesses.

The NERAKIN Network is expected to produce, during its first phase of three years of operations (2007-2010), the following specific outputs:

- A pilot Rural and Agricultural Knowledge and Information Network (NERAKIN) through building a Regional Gateway function and a collaborative network of technical institutions and organizations committed to capacity building in this area.
- A pilot NERAKIN knowledge and information management system of national components including modules (information systems) on documents, institutions, experts and projects; facilitating access to other agricultural information services and databases relevant to the rural and agricultural sector; and enabling the exchange of information and knowledge among stakeholder groups.
- Networked all ARC agricultural institutions through a regional portal as well as through national portals.
- A team of nationally selected focal points and technical staff at the different agricultural institutions trained on how to adopt and integrate information from their institutions into the NERAKIN and to maintain it as a high-quality information and communication resource using NERAKIN content management system and modern information management. These trained staff will be expected to train others in the future.
- Development of operational plans for the network that would strengthen knowledge-sharing and learning process and foster partnerships for broader knowledge-sharing and learning at national and regional levels.
- Development of an operational framework that would define the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders at the national level.

#### **4.3 AARINENA Networks**

The technical 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 one region and/or different regions of the world.

Networks are found to reduce duplicative efforts among national institutions in several countries and to provide a cost-effective instrument for information exchange and institution building (including training). When the resources are limited, networks become more effective means for the optimal utilization of indigenous expertise and available resources among the countries themselves.

Four commodity networks including: date-palm, olive, cotton, medicinal and aromatic plants, in addition to two technical networks for water use efficiency and agricultural biotechnology have become an increasingly important means of action, and to further collaboration in agricultural research and innovation in the region. The new Regional Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) Network should be country driven to further strengthen national and regional genetic resources programs, fostering the conservation and sustainable use of PGR in the region, and promoting the exchange of PGR scientific and technical experience and information.

The highlights of the progress on these Networks are as follows:

#### 4.3.1 Date Palm Global Network (DPGN)

The 7th General Conference of AARINENA, held in Beirut–Lebanon in 2000, adopted the establishment of AARINENA Regional Date-palm Network, effective in April 2002.

To Unified efforts and facilitate actions, the regional network merged to the Date Palm Global Network that was established under aegis of FAO, and operates from the United Arab Emirates University at Al-Ain assisted by technical secretariat from FAO.

Countries of Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, U.A.E and Yemen are members of the network. To promote collaboration among the DPGN regions, three Regional Coordinators defined: AARINENA: for the Near East and North Africa; Namibia: for the Sub-Saharan Africa; and Chile: For South America. Moreover, the DPGN include four technical working groups:

- Pests and diseases group, hosted by Egypt
- Production and Commercialization group, hosted by UAE and Namibia
- Post Harvest Physiology and Processing group, hosted by UAE and Iraq
- Germplasm and Propagation group, hosted by UAE and India

##### *Network Activities:*

- The Network organized the Third International Date Palm Conference that was held 19-23 February, 2006 under the Patronage of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahayan, President of United Arab Emirates under the auspices of UAE University. The Conference was attended by approximately 300 participants, and recommended to give attention to an important crop with significant production and marketing issue. The proceedings of the conference were published in *Acta Horticulture* and distributed to all participants.
- 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).
- Held the Third International Date Palm Exhibition (March 2008)

#### 4.3.2 Inter-Regional Cotton Network in Asia and North Africa (INCANA)

AARINENA, the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutes (APAARI) and Central Asian and Caucasian Association of Agricultural Research Institutes (CACAARI), recognizing the importance of cotton production in a number of developing countries in Asia and North Africa, producing more than half of the world's cotton production, and considering the prime role and importance of cotton in the agricultural economy with the support of GFAR and ICARDA established the Inter-regional Cotton Network, in October, 2002. The Cotton Research Institute of Iran at Varamin was selected to host the Network Secretariat.

The 11<sup>th</sup> leading cotton producers in the region are members of INCANA: Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, Syria, Azerbaijan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and

Uzbekistan. Along with AARINENA, APAARI, CACAARI, the key partners of INCANA are: ICARDA, GFAR and AREO.

Four working groups are active in INCANA:

- Biotechnology application (India)
- IPM on cotton (Syria)
- Mechanization of cotton cultivation (Uzbekistan and Tajikistan)
- Soil and water management (Pakistan and Egypt)

#### *Network Activities*

##### ▪ *Cotton Integrated Pest Management (IPM ) Traveling Workshop*

IPM has been successfully implemented in several cotton growing countries in the world including Syria. By using IPM strategies, Syria has achieved the second highest cotton yield in the world (1300 kg/ha). Following this success story, the workshop on cotton IPM was held in Aleppo, Syria during 16-21 August 2006, and cosponsored by INCANA, APAARI and AARINENA with the collaboration of General Establishment for Agricultural Scientific Research of Syria. The participants coming from 8 INCANA member countries: Egypt, India, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The participants discussed and adopted the following recommendations:

- Use Syria success story in IPM program to overcome their cotton pest problems.
- The use of biological and agricultural practices is the most important components of cotton IPM programs.
- Farmers Field Schools (FFS) are an important part of IPM programs
- Encourage the transfer of biological control technology among INCANA countries.
- Encourage the use of natural and plant products, and transgenic cotton (Bt) with consideration of environmental safety

##### ▪ *The Third Steering Committee Meeting of Inter-regional Cotton Network in the Central Asia and North Africa (INCANA) 19-20 June 2007*

This meeting was held in Damascus, Syria during the period 19-20 June 2007. Twelve participants from Egypt, India, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan attended the meeting. In the first session, the country reports of Egypt, India, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan addressed the problems and results in cotton research and development, Bt cotton, and IPM program on cotton. During the second session, a round table discussion on network plan 2007-2009 and the establishment of working groups were established as follows:

- Biotechnology application including development of transgenic cotton for biotic and abiotic stresses ( India)
- IPM on cotton (Syria)
- Mechanization of cotton cultivation (Uzbekistan and Tajikistan)
- Soil and water management (Pakistan and Egypt)

The participants discussed and adopted the following:

- Budgeting for the network: The INCANA Secretariat will be supported by APAARI, AARINENA, GFAR, ICARDA, CACAARI and FAO regional office in Turkey.
- Organize advanced training workshop on IPM in one of the Central Asian countries.
- Planned activities:
  - The working groups will prepare four proposals including capacity building and training to be presented to donors for funding.
  - Organize workshops on IPM, seed technology, cotton quality assessment and evaluation, drought and water management.

- Publish the network newsletter biannually, where, members and representatives should participate in the newsletter content.

#### 4.3.3 Regional Olive Network

The Olive network was established in February 2004 and hosted by the Olive Tree Institute at Sfax-Tunisia, to strengthen Interregional cooperation by establishing linkages to The European System of Cooperative Research Networks in Agriculture (SCORENA). Nine olive producers in the Association region are joined as members of the network: Cyprus, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. The network includes three olive technical working groups:

- Olive production and Protection group: hosted by Egypt
- Post-harvest processing technologies group: hosted by Jordan
- Socio-economic and commercialization group: hosted by Syria.

The focal points were selected from NGOs, Private sector, research institutions and universities. They will constitute the coordinating board of the network.

##### *Network Activities*

- *Guidelines on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for Olive Producing Countries*

The workshop was organized by AARINENA, GFAR & FAO/RNE and hosted by the Agricultural Research Institute in Cyprus. The meeting was attended by participants from 11 countries: [Morocco](#), [Tunisia](#), Libya, [Egypt](#), [Syria](#), [Jordan](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Yemen](#), Iran, Palestine and Cyprus. Most the participants were members of AARINENA Olive Network and representative's form ICARDA and SCORENA.

The workshop was mainly dedicated to finalizing the guidelines on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for AARNENA olive producing counties. There were presentations on country profiles by Olive Network Focal Point Members and extensive discussions on the various chapters of the draft handbook on GAP by several working groups in order to modify and adapt the guidelines to the existing conditions of AARINENA countries.

- Olive GAP manual under publication by FAO
- Success story for linking farmers to market was prepared

#### 4.3.4 Regional Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Network (MAP)

The Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Network was established in September 2004, to strengthen partnership among all the different bodies and stakeholders in each of the participating member countries that are involved in any manner through out the overall medicinal and herbal plants chain. Starting from cultivation and production to processing, marketing and research.

The network is hosted by the National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension (NCARE) with the following working groups:

- Conversation and Sustainable Use Group: hosted by Morocco
- Agricultural Practices: Sudan
- Post Harvest Processing Technology: Jordan
- Scio-economic and Commercialization: Malta.

Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, Jordan, Malta, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, Syria and Yemen are members of the Medicinal and Herbal Plants Network.

##### *Network Activities*

- *The First General Assembly Meeting, Malta*

The Network members met in Malta and adopted the working plan 2006/2007 that included:

- Formulation of a questionnaire that covers the current projects and tools present in member countries, including information related to the four working groups (key points – strengths and weaknesses). This will lead to the drafting of concept notes.
- Building the capacity of NARS in the area of MAPs through provision of technical advice and training on MAP operations
- Increase support to conservation, use of MAPs through public awareness strategy
- Produce a brochure and a poster targeted at policy makers in order to attract new members to AARINENA.
- Empowering/strengthening of local communities to better use of MAPs to improve the livelihoods through provision of MAP information systems that document, analyze and share traditional knowledge and socio-economic studies on MAPs. IPGRI-GRIS can be used as modelling tool to establish this system
- Establishing contact lists for MAPs.

- *The 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Recent Trends in Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Egypt, 21-23 November 2006. Organized in Collaboration with ESMAP and FAO*

#### **4.3.5 Regional Water Use Efficiency Network**

AARINENA, ICARDA and GFAR established the Water use Efficiency Network in November 2007. The Network aim to contribute to water saving, improvement and sustained productivity and quality through mobilization of existing knowledge and production of adapted technology packages.

The secretariat of the Network is hosted at INRA –Morocco. Four technical working groups were formed:

- Management and conservation of rain water in rain fed agriculture (Yemen).
- Sustainable management of water in irrigated agriculture (Iran).
- Decision making and water management tools-modeling and GIS (Egypt).
- Institutional, policy and socio-economy analysis and evaluation of water in irrigated agriculture (Syria).

Countries of Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yemen, in addition to ICARDA and FAO are members of the network.

#### *Network Activities*

- *AARINENA Expert Consultation for Establishment of Water Use Efficiency (WUE) Network, Aleppo-Syria, 26-27 November 2006*

AARINENA in collaboration with ICARDA and GFAR held an expert consultation meeting at ICARDA, Aleppo-Syria during 26-27 November, 2006. Water use efficiency experts participated in the meeting from Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen, ICARDA and FAO. The participants presented their country profiles and reviewed the proposal for establishing a WUE Network in the WANA region.

The participants adopted the Proposal for the establishment of the network with the following composition:

- The venue and the secretariat of the Network will be at INRA -Morocco.
- Elected Dr. Ayman Abu-Hadid from Egypt as the chairman of the board of the network.

- Identified the following countries to host the technical working groups:
  - Management and conservation of rainwater in rain fed agriculture (Yemen).
  - Sustainable management of water in irrigated agriculture (Iran).
  - Decision making and water management tools {modeling and GIS}, (Egypt).
  - Institutional, policy and socio-economy analysis and evaluation of water in irrigated agriculture (Syria).
- The participants recommended as a priority activity for the network to be implemented in 2007/2008 the formulation of an ATLAS that will serve to compile data on water use efficiency in the region.

#### 4.3.6 Regional Agricultural Biotechnology Network

The need for a coordinating body and a technical cooperation network on agricultural biotechnology for the promotion of cooperation among the regional institutes, AARINENA established the Agricultural Biotechnology Network in 15-16 December, 2007.

The Network secretariat is hosted by the Agricultural Genetic Engineering Research Institute (AGERI) in Giza –Egypt. The members of the network include 14 Countries: Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen.

##### *Network Activities*

- *Expert Consultation Meeting for the Establishment of Agricultural Biotechnology Network, Cairo, 15-16 December 2007*

The participants selected AGERI-ARC, Egypt to be the venue for the Network Secretariat and elected the following officers:

- Dr. M. Madkour From AGERI as the Network Coordinator ,
- Dr. Y. Al-Shayji from Kuwait as board Chairman,

Four Technical Working Groups were selected:

- *Omics and Molecular Markers Technology, (Iran –ABARII)*
- *Gene transfer, Expression and regulation, (Tunis-CBS-SFAX)*
- *Bio-safety, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), (Syria-GCSAR)*
- *Bioinformatics and Knowledge Management, (Egypt-AGERI)*

Two Interregional activities with APCoAB were planned:

- Marker Aided Selection and Biosafety activity was held by APAARI, APCoAB and MARDI with the support of GFAR in Malaysia in August 2008.
- Bioinformatics Training Course to be held November 2008 at AGERI-Egypt

#### 4.3.7 NEW Regional Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) Network

The first step in this activity is to develop a succinct concept paper articulating the purpose, mission and modus operandi of the proposed network, as well as a detailed plan of action for the implementation of the steps leading to the foundation of the network and program of work and budget.

The network proposed document will be presented at the network session for adoption at the 11<sup>th</sup> General Conference to be held in Damascus 12-14<sup>th</sup> October 2008

The new network should be country driven to further strengthen national and regional genetic resources programs with the following objectives:

- Foster the conservation and sustainable use of PGR in the region
- Promote the exchange of PGR scientific and technical experience and information
- Strengthen national PGR research capacities for providing timely and necessary data and information to policy makers
- Encourage the establishment of cooperative PGR research and training programs in accordance with identified regional, bilateral or national needs and priorities
- Strengthen cross-linkages between national, regional and international research centers and other organizations, including universities, through involvement in jointly planned PGR research and training programs, and
- Assist in the mobilization of financial and other forms of support to strengthen PGR conservation and sustainable use for development in the region.
- To avoid shortcomings in past PGR collaboration in the Region, the establishment and launching of the proposed network should be orderly and professionally executed. It is suggested that an Executing Agency/Organization be appointed by AARINENA/GFAR to undertake operational and legal steps leading to the establishment of the network.

#### **4.4 Inter-regional collaboration**

##### **4.4.1 Workshop on “Global Partnership Program on Linking Smallholder Farmers to Growth Market”, Cairo 11-15 September 2006**

A workshop on the global partnership program on linking smallholder farmers to growth markets was held in Cairo during the period of 11-15 September 2006. The workshop was sponsored by the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR). The meeting was attended by representatives of the Regional ARD Forums of AARINENA, Asia-Pacific (APAARI), sub-Saharan Africa (FARA) and Latin America and the Caribbean (FORAGRO) who have been engaged in a process for the preparation of concrete regional proposals on which the Global Partnership Program (GPP) will be based. In each region a multi-stakeholder ad hoc working group has been established to discuss and identify the respective contributions to and demands on an inter-regional partnership programme on the theme of Linking Farmers to Markets. The workshop outputs were:

- A draft of a Concept Note for the establishment of a Global Partnership Program on the theme of Linking Smallholder Farmers to Growth Markets that establishes the rationale, vision, mission, proposed outcomes and outputs of the program, and identifies the principal participants with their respective roles and responsibilities
- A short-term plan of action for the start-up phase of the program that will establish an interim governance structure and the activities required to build the program into a full fledged global program.
- AARINENA nominated a farmer representative to serve in the interim secretariat for the GPP on linking small producers to market. The first meeting of the secretariat was held at FAO HQ in June 2007
- Regional Success stories on linking small producers to market from AARINENA were prepared and published according to specific terms of reference set by the interim committee.

##### **4.4.2 Collaboration with FARA**

*Establishment of North African Sub regional Organization (NASRO) with FARA*

AARINENA participated in the Fourth Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) General Assembly, which took place in Sandston, South Africa from 10 – 16 June 2007. The

meeting asked AARINENA to assist in the establishment of North African Organization (NASRO) to be inline with FARA Entebbe Declaration. The draft constitution for NASRO was prepared to be adopted by the next 11th AARINENA general conference.

#### 4.4.3 Collaboration with APAARI and CACARI

- AARINENA participated in APAARI General Assembly and Expert Consultation "on Agricultural Innovations" held in New Delhi-India , November 2006
- Cosponsored with APAARI and CACCARI the INCANA General Assembly Meeting in Damascus, June 2007.
- AARINENA participated in CACARI Expert Consultation on Regional Research Need Assessment meeting held in Tashkent , March 2007.

#### 4.4.4 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) along with other regional representatives.
- 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 three SAG meetings held in conjunction with ERA-ARD SC.
- AARINENA submitted its input to the joint proposal on bio-energy and capacity building with ERA-ARD project.
- AARINENA provided ERA –ARD project task leaders with experts who participated in various project activities.

### 4.5 Publications

#### 4.5.1 Newsletter

- AARINENA biannual 5 Newsletter 2006/2007 (Vol.14-1,Vol. 14.2 , Vol. 15.1. 15.2 and 16.1) were published and distributed to all members, research institutions, and faculties of agriculture at universities in the region. The newsletter is available on AARINENA website.
- OLEA Information Bulletin of the ESCORENA and AARINENA Research Network on Olive published Bulletins No. 25 and No. 26 July 2007

#### 4.5.2 Success Stories

The following success stories have been published:

- Success story from Oman on "Can we produce seed of indigenous pasture species in hot humid gulf climate to re-vegetate degraded lands" was published: AARINENA publication 2005/1.
- Success story from Saudi Arabia on "Micro propagation and DNA fingerprinting of date palm trees in Saudi Arabia". AARINENA publication 2006/1.
- Success story from Yemen on "Revitalizing Community-Based Traditional Seed Systems in Yemen: Experience of an Outreach Seed Program". AARINENA publication 2007/1.
- AARINENA prepared three success stories on Linking Farmers to Markets in the WANA Region from Egypt, Jordan and Yemen.

### 4.5.3 Proceedings of Meetings

- Proceedings of AARINENA General Conferences, Executive Committee meetings, workshops and training courses were distributed and posted on AARINENA Home page.
- Setting Agricultural Research Priorities for CWANA Region
- AARINENA General Rules of procedure were amended for adoption.
- Directories of agricultural Research Institutions in the WANA Region
- Proceedings of the activities for AARINENA (ICM4ARD), May 2007
- Proceedings of Water Use Efficiency country profiles
- Proceedings of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference & Exhibition Recent Trends in Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Production, November 2006
- Proceedings of the Regional Workshop for Strengthening National Information Communication Management Focal Units in Near East Region, Muscat, Oman, 8-10 January 2008
- Proceedings of Export Consultation for Establishment of Agricultural Biotechnology Network in the WANA Region, Cairo, Egypt, 15-16 December 2007
- Proceedings of Regional Workshop on Information Systems for Agricultural Research for Development, Cairo, Egypt, 27-30 May 2007
- Proceedings of AARINENA Expert Consultation Meeting for Establishment of Water Use Efficiency Network, ICARDA-Aleppo- Syria, 26-27 November 2006
- [Toward a Regional Strategy for the Conservation of Plant Genetic Resources in West Asia & North Africa \(WANA\)](#)

### 4.6 Workshops, Training Courses and Expert Consultations Meetings

Workshops, Training Courses and Expert Consultations Meetings findings and reports were distributed and posted on AARINENA Home page. The following events are carried out during the period 2006-2007 in collaboration with GFAR, FAO and ICARDA:

- Harnessing Biotechnology and genetic Engineering for Agricultural Development in the Near East & North Africa, Cairo -Egypt 12-14 February , 2006
- The Third International Conference on Date-Palm , Abu-Dhabi-UAE, 19-21 February 2006
- GPhI and Network Coordinators follow up meeting to finalize the 3 project ideas, Abu-Dhabi, UAE 22 February 2006
- ICT-RAIS General Assembly Meeting Amman-Jordan April 2006
- 10<sup>th</sup> AARINENA General Conference , Sana'a –Yemen, 25-27 June 2006
- Advocacy workshop for AARINENA NARS leaders , Sana'a-Yemen 26 June 2006
- Cotton IPM traveling Workshop, Syria, 16-21 August 2006
- Workshop on GPP: Linking farmers to market , Egypt Sept. 2006
- AARINENA Expert Consultation Meeting for establishing WUE Network , Aleppo-Syria November 2007
- The 12th International Conference on Recent Trends in Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Egypt, November 2006
- Regional Workshop on agricultural Information Systems for agricultural Research & Development Cairo-Egypt May 2007
- Third INCANA Steering Committee Meeting Damascus-Syria 2007
- Expert Consultation meeting for establishment of Agricultural Biotechnology Network, Cairo, 15-16 December 2007
- ICT focal units training workshop, Muscat –Oman 8-10 Jan.2008
- The third International Date Palm Exhibition at UAE ,March 08;

## V. Future Activities

- AARINENA will continue strengthening RAIS:
- Organizing regional training workshop for Capacity building In collaboration with FAO/ RNE December 2008
- Enhancement of New version of AARINENA Web site (English and Arabic) using Content Management System (CMS)
- Organize an expert consultation on " Revisiting priority setting for the WANA Region"
- Supporting and strengthening existing Regional Network activities
- Support the establishment of GPP for Linking Farmers to Market
- Strengthening Inter-regional Cooperation

## VI. Conclusions

- AARINENA has supported National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in the region in capacity building through training programs, technical and scientific workshops and conferences, and establishing regional information and communication system (RAIS) through active support and active participation of GFAR, ICARDA and FAO. In this regard, a web site ([www.aarinena.org](http://www.aarinena.org)) to disseminate information to member countries was enhanced in both Arabic and English.
- AARINENA has also contributed establishing six Regional and Inter-regional networks for essential crops in the region; date palm, cotton, olive, medicinal & aromatic plants, water use efficiency and Agricultural biotechnology and in the process of establishing a networks Plant Genetic Resources (PGR). AARINENA played the major role in the implementation of the "Strategic Framework for Global Partnership Program on Linking Smallholder Farmers to Growth Market" and strengthened inter-regional cooperation with other regional Fora.
- AARINENA acted as a facilitator in bringing the views, aspirations and research priorities of the WANA region to the attention of relevant international organizations with the aim of promoting a sustainable agricultural development through attraction of global agricultural and developmental communities, as well as donors to support the regional and sub-regional research projects and related activities.

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## **Annex.1: AARINENA Members by 2008**

### **Member Country Institutions**

- Agriculture Production Research Center- Ministry of Agriculture (Oman)
- ARC- Agricultural Research Center (Libya)
- ARC- Agricultural Research Center (Sudan)
- AREA- Agricultural Research & Extension Authority (Yemen)
- AREO- Agricultural Research and Education Organization (Iran)
- ARI- Agricultural Research Institute (Cyprus)
- ARC- Agricultural Research Center (Egypt)
- GCSAR- General Commission for Scientific Agricultural Research (Syria)
- INRA- de L'Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (Morocco)
- Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique d'Algérie (Algeria)
- Institute of Agriculture, University of Malta (Malta)
- IRESA- de l'Institution de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur Agricoles (Tunisia)
- King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
- KISR- Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (Kuwait)
- LARI- Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute (Lebanon)
- Ministry of Environment & Water (United Arab Emirates)
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture (Qatar)
- NARC- National Agricultural Research Center (Palestine)
- NCARE- National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension (Jordan)
- NILTA- Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (Pakistan)
- PAAF- Public Authority for Agriculture & Fisheries (Kuwait)
- State Board for Agricultural Research (Iraq)
- UoJ- University of Jordan, Faculty of Agriculture (Jordan)

### **Member Organizations**

- ACSAD- Arab Center for Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands
- AOAD- Arab Organization for Agricultural Development
- BI- Biodiversity International
- FAO/RNE- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/ Regional Office for the Near East
- GFAR- Global Forum on Agricultural Research
- ICARDA- International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas
- ICBA- International Center for Biosaline Agriculture
- IFPRI- International Food Policy Research Institute

### **Reciprocal Members**

- APAARI- Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions
- ASPP- Arab Society for Plant Protection
- CACAARI- Central Asia and Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions
- FARA- Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
- FORAGRO- Regional Forum of Agricultural Research in Latin America and Caribbean
- IFAP- International Federation of Agricultural Producers
- NGO- Non-Governmental Organizations A Scientific Association for Conservation (Lebanon).

**Annex.2: AARINENA Networks**

<b>Network</b>	<b>Coordinator</b>	<b>Location</b>
Regional Olive Network	Dr. Boubaker Karray	Olive Tree Institute, Sfax-Tunisa
Date Palm Global Network	Prof. Dr. Abdelouahhab Zaid	UAE University, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates
Regional Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Network	Dr. Musa Fayyad	NCARE, Jordan
Inter-regional Cotton Network	Mrs. Asiel Gharedaghi	Cotton Research Institute, Iran
Regional Water Use Efficiency Network	Dr. Bahri Abdeljabbar	INRA, Morocco
Regional Biotechnology Network	Prof. Dr. Magdy Madkour	AGERI, Egypt

**Annex.3: AARINENA Regional Agricultural Information Systems – Information and Communication Systems (RAIS-ICM) Focal Units**

- Agricultural Information Center, Qatar
- Agricultural research Center- ARC, Sudan
- Agricultural research Center- ARC-Libya
- Agricultural Research Corporation, Sudan
- AREA- Agricultural Research & Extension Authority (Yemen)
- AREO- Agricultural Research and Education Organization (Iran)
- ARI- Agricultural Research Institute (Cyprus)
- ASIDC- Agricultural Scientific Information & Documentation Center (Iran)
- CLAES- ARC- Agricultural Research Center (Egypt)
- GCSAR- General Commission for Scientific Agricultural Research (Syria)
- INRA- de L'Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (Morocco)
- IRESA, - Institution de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur Agricoles (Tunisia)
- LARI- Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute (Lebanon)
- Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries, Oman
- NCARE- National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension (Jordan)

## **Annex 4: Program for the 11th General Conference of AARINENA 12-14 October 2008, Damascus-Syria**

### **Sunday 12 October 2008 - Day1**

08:30-10:00 Registration

#### 10:00-11:00 Opening Session

Statement by the President of AARINENA

Statement by FAO/RNE ADG

Statement by ICARDA Director General Representing CGIAR

Statement by GFAR Chair

Statement by H.E. the Minister of Agriculture & Agrarian Reform, Syria

11:00 -11:30 Coffee Break, Group Picture

11:30 -11:40 Adoptions of the Agenda and Timetable,  
Election of Reporter and Nomination Officer  
AARINENA President

#### Global & Inter-Regional Collaboration Session

Chair: Dr. A. El-Beltagy

Co-Chair: Dr. S. Barghouti

11:40-12:00 Global Cooperation in ARD, Dr. Mark Holderness

12:00-12:20 Inter-Regional Cooperation, APAARI/AARINENA, Dr. R. Paroda

12:20-12:35 Inter-Regional Cooperation, FARA/AARINENA, Dr. A. Agumya

12:35 -12:50 Inter-Regional Cooperation, FORAGRO, Dr. M. Allegri

12:50-13:10 Coffee Break

13:10-13:25 Inter-regional Cooperation, ERA-ARD, Dr. C. Hoste

13:25-13:40 ARIMNet, a Cooperative Network for Agricultural Research in the  
Mediterranean, Dr. M Dodet

13:40-13:55 Collaboration between AARINENA and ISHS, Dr. N. Looney

13:55 -14:50 Lunch Break

#### AARINENA Activities Session

Chair: Dr. A. Al-Bakri

Co-Chair: Dr. M. Albraithen

14:50 -15:20 AARINENA Activity Report, Dr. I. Hamdan

#### Regional Agricultural Information System (RAIS)

15:20-15:45 Enhancing Information & Knowledge in WANA, Dr. Ajit Maru

15:45-16:10 AARINENA.RAIS Progress Report, Mrs. T. Ebrahimi

16:10-16:35 Launching NERAKIN & Development Status of thematic Networks,  
Mr. M. Latif

16:35-16:50 Discussion

#### Election Announcement

16:50 -17:10 Election Announcement by the Nomination Officer

17:10-17:45 Review Posters & Publications

19:30 Dinner hosted by H.E. Minister of Agriculture & Agrarian Reform in Syria

**Monday 13 October 2008 - Day 2**Network Activities Session

Chair: Dr. M. Solh  
 Co-Chair: Dr. M. Roozitalab

09:00 - 09:15 Cotton Inter-Regional Network, Mrs. A. Gharedaghi  
 09:15 - 09:30 Olive Network, Dr. B. Karray  
 09:30 - 09:45 Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Network, Dr. M. Fayyad  
 09:45 -10:00 Water Use Efficiency Network, Dr. A. Bahri  
 10:00-10:15 Agricultural Biotechnology Network, Dr. M. Madkour

10:15-10:45 Coffee Break

Regional Plant Genetic Resources Network (PGRN)

10:45- 11:15 Establishment of Regional PGRN at WANA, Dr. G. Ayad, BI  
 11:15- 11:35 Global Crop Diversity Trust collaboration with PGRN, Dr. L. [Guarino](#)  
 11:35- 11:50 Discussion

Research Priority Setting

Chair: Dr. W. Tawil  
 Co-Chair: Dr. C. Hoste

11:50-12:10 Global Priorities and Needs, Dr. Ajit Maru, GFAR  
 12:10-12:30 Revisiting CWANA Research Priorities & Needs Assessment,  
 Dr. K. Shideed, ICARDA  
 12:30-12:50 ICARDA Small Ruminants workshop Summary, Dr. S. Galal  
 12:50 -13:00 Discussions

13:00-14:00 Lunch Break

Linking Farmers to Market (LFM) Global Partnership Program (GPP)

Chair : Dr. I. Muharram  
 Co-Chair: Eng. M. El-Kholy

14:00-14:25 Project Development to support LFM-GPP, Dr. M. Garcia  
 14:25-14:50 LFM AARINENA Case Studies, Dr. Samir Habbab  
 14:50-15:00 Discussion

15:00-15:30 Coffee Break

IAASTD Sub-Global Assessment for CWANA Session

Chair: Dr. S. Christiansen

15:30-17:00 IAASTD Findings, Dr. M. Guellouz & Dr. H. Herren  
 - Presentation of IAASTD  
 - Discussion  
 - Presentation of the Results of IAASTD  
 - Discussion

Brainstorming Session: How Research can contribute to the implementation of IAASTD Results.

19:30 Dinner hosted by the "French Initiative for International Agricultural Research" (FI4IAR)

**Tuesday 14 October 2008 - Day 3**AARINENA Administrative Issues Session (AARINENA Members)

Chair: Dr. A. Abou-Hadid,

Co-chair: Dr. M. Holderness

8:30-9:00 Constitutional Amendments; Dr. M. Roozitalab

9:00-9:20 Financial Report, Mrs. Hala Hamati

9:20- 9:50 Launching of NASRO, Eng. A. Gibriel

9:50:10:20 Coffee Break

Election Session

Chair: Nomination Officer

Co-Chair: Dr. I. Hamdan

10:20 -11:00 Election of the President, Vice President and 5 Sub-regional Representatives

11:00 -11:10 Date &amp; Venue of the 12th General Conference

11:10 -11:20 Closure

11:20 -12:00 Newly Elected Executive Committee Members (Closed Meeting)

12:00 Field Trip to Surghaya Research Station for fruit trees followed by  
Lunch hosted by Director General of GCSAR in Bloudan

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