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**Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in
the Near East & North Africa (AARINENA)
Participation in the IFAP's
36th World Farmers' Congress Washington DC,
29th May-4th of June 2004**

A Brief Report

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Executive Secretary
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June 6th 2004



1. General Impressions on the Congress:

1.1. The Conference attended by representatives of over 77 countries and included sessions on:

- **Friday 28 May:** Evening Reception for developing country farm leaders and the development cooperation committee
- **Saturday 29 May:**
 - Development Cooperation Committee
 - IFAP Development Seminar-Committee on Agriculture in developing countries
- **Sunday 30th May:** Regional Meetings-Parallel Sessions; Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Mediterranean
- **Monday 31st June:** Specialized Committees- Parallel Session on Women in Agriculture, Young Farmers and Agricultural Cooperatives
- **Tuesday 1st June:** Commodity Groups-Parallel Sessions on: Grains & Oil seeds, Dairy Products, Meats & Feeds and Tropical Commodities
- **Wednesday 2nd June:** Opening Plenary Session
 - Speeches by: IFAP President, USA Secretary of Agriculture, and UN Under Secretary General
 - Reports By:
 - 1) International Organizations: GFAR Executive Secretary and ICA President
 - 2) IFAP Sec. Gen
 - 3) Committee Chairs
 - Policy Committee Session and
- **Thursday 3rd June:** Policy Committee Session continued
- **Friday 4th June:** Closing Plenary session

1.2. During the Congress the interaction between farmers from Mediterranean-AARINENA region with global organizations representatives gave a good forum for discussion on issues of mutual interest and gave good visibility to AARINENA, and GFAR representatives among farmers. AARINENA had an excellent opportunity to interact with Farmers from the region and started discussions re: farmers and their organizations involvement in AARINENA programs and activities.

2. IFAP Mediterranean Committee Session:

2.1. The Committee met during the Regional Parallel Sessions of the Congress on Sunday 30th of May 2004

2.2. IFAP Secretariat officer, coordinator of the Committee, presented a progress report on the study to enhance complementarities in the Mediterranean that was supported by CIHEAM.

- 2.3. The study called for greater involvement of the Farmers' Organizations represented in the Committee. The results of the study were presented in the form of concrete proposals that will be submitted to different European bodies.
- 2.4. The participants requested prompt action to set up a joint scheme involving complementarily for the establishment of free trade zone in 2010 in order to fill the widening gap between north and south of the Mediterranean basin. There was a pressing need to:
- Review the question of production calendars more closely
 - Promote the quality of products
 - Introduction of Mediterranean label
 - Training of trainers of agricultural leaders in Farmers' Organizations
 - Promote cooperation between north and south Mediterranean countries to extend outlets for agricultural produce
- 2.5. It was recommended to continue following up on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership at several levels:
- Ongoing efforts were needed to encourage EU institutions considering agriculture as one of the priorities of the Euro-Med partnership.
 - Convening the second Euro-Mediterranean Conference on agriculture as a follow up to the first conference held in Strasbourg in June 2001.
 - The secretariat will resume contacting representatives of the European Parliament to implement this conference
 - Participants expressed that the topics for discussion in the conference be practical
- 2.6. It was recommended to reinforce the network of Mediterranean Farmers' Organizations and increase their involvement in the Mediterranean Committee, hence:
- The secretariat called upon member farmer organizations to get more involved in the committee work program
 - The secretariat will continue promoting the Mediterranean committee by requesting non-members to join IFAP.
- 2.7. The participants recommended continuing collaboration with CEHEAM
- 2.8. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) called upon IFAP to incorporate the views of the Mediterranean farmers in the report on "food security in conjunction Euro-Med partnership".
- 2.9. The participants deplored marginalization of agriculture in the Meda programs and proposed more contacts with the European institutions to remedy the situation. They further recommended taking steps to incorporate rural development projects in line with European Commission directions.

- 2.10. The participants acknowledged and expressed their appreciation to the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) interest in working closely with Farmers organizations in:
- developing research programs;
 - strengthening linkages between farmers and their organizations with NARS in Regional Fora ;and
 - considering farmers and their organizations as an important constituency of GFAR stakeholders

IFAP Secretariat will contact GFAR and its concerned Regional Fora representatives to put them in contact with Farmers' Organizations represented in the Committee. At the same time the committee will submit proposals to AARINENA for capacity building for the southern Mediterranean Farmers' Organizations.

- 2.11. IFAP secretariat is pleased to let the Mediterranean Committee use its communication facilities to improve its feasibility within IFAP and through out the Mediterranean Region. Similarly, member organizations were requested to provide useful information for dissemination among member countries.

3. **How GFAR Could Participate More Effectively in Future IFAP Conferences :**

- 3.1 GFAR Secretariat should be informed ahead of time and be closely involved in developing the agenda concerned with Regional Fora sessions in order to prepare working papers and participate more effectively.
- 3.2. GFAR would be better presented if the organizers of the congress have given GFAR the chance for a special round table session that will focus on strengthening linkages between researchers and farmers

4. **Benefits to AARINENA:**

- 4.1. AARINENA has gained visibility and was exposed to farmer's organization from the WANA region.
- 4.2. AARINENA discussed with Farmers' Organizations representatives from Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt their possible involvement with AARINENA ` activities, networks and programs and encouraged these organizations to become `members of AARINENA
- 4.3. The conference has given AARINENA a good opportunity to interact with Farmers' Organizations from the region and strengthen linkages with them.