

## MESSAGE



**Dr. Ahmed Al-Bakri**

It gives me pleasure to convey my message to the readers of the AARINENA Newsletter. In this message I would like to emphasize, as Vice President of AARINENA, more on its contribution particularly in relation to Arabian Peninsula.

Arabian Peninsula comprises of seven countries viz. Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. These have a common cultural heritage and identity and share some common agriculture features. The region is characterized by dry weather with low rainfall except some parts of Yemen and Sultanate of Oman, which receive monsoon showers. Agriculture in Arabian Peninsula is mainly based on use of ground water. Date palm is considered as the main agriculture crop besides some field, horticulture, vegetable, and forage crops. Arabian Peninsula face similar agro-ecological stresses like drought, salinity and water stress. Desertification is yet another problem faced by the region. Decision makers in the respective countries try to solve these problems by developing new techniques in irrigation to save water, finding new crop species that tolerate drought and salinity and re-habilitation of barren rangelands by conservation of indigenous species through National Agriculture Research.

National Agricultural Research has a significant role in achieving the goals through initiation of special programs dealing with common issues faced each country. Some of these projects are linked with international organizations and institutes such as the International Center for

Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), Arabian Peninsula Regional Program (APRP), International Centre for Bio-saline Agriculture (ICBA), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others.

Of the many, AARTNENA's main objectives that are more concerned at the moment, are to foster the development of agricultural research, promote the exchange of scientific and technical experience and information, encourage the establishment of appropriate co-operative research and training program. In this regard, I would like highlight role of ICARDA-APRP in combating issues of salinity, drought and water stresses. Promoting cultivation of vegetables in green houses, hydroponics and soil-less cultures has been a significant achievement of ICARDA-APRP that AARENENA has identified and wants to exchange and extend the information to other countries as well. Role of Sultanate of Oman in initiating re-habilitation of barren rangelands is needless to mention here.

AARINENA is publishing our success story on the possibility of seed production of indigenous rangeland forage grass species in large quantities to be used for re-seeding activities for improving rangelands. These cases may help encourage other countries to adapt and flourish. The strengthening a solid base of national agricultural research in collaboration with other countries and international organizations will certainly assist in developing sustainable agriculture in the region which reflects positively in other parts of the world.

In view of the above, I wish that AARINENA would further enhance and strengthen the linkage of agriculture activities between the countries involved to flourish the lives of farmers and consumers in the region.

I wish all the best to AARINENA on this occasion,

**Dr. Ahmed Naser Al-Bakri**  
**Vice President of AARINENA**