

AARINENA IN ACTION

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



H.E Mr. Amin Abaza Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation of Egypt, with the Participants of the Expert Consultation Meeting for the Establishment of Agricultural Biotechnology Network, Cairo, 15-16 December 2007

Under the patronage of H.E Mr. Amin Abaza, Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation of Egypt, the Expert Consultation Meeting for the Establishment of Agricultural Biotechnology Network was held in Cairo, Egypt during the period 15-16 December 2007.

The meeting was hosted by Egypt Agricultural Research Center (ARC), and sponsored by the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), and AARINENA.

The Agricultural Biotechnology Network was established upon the recommendations of AARINENA Executive Committee, and emerged from the need for a coordinating body and a technical cooperation network on agricultural biotechnology for the promotion of cooperation among the region states for the optimal utilization of limited resources available for the development of agricultural biotechnology.

The objective of the Consultation Meeting was to discuss the establishment of Regional Network for Agricultural Biotechnology in the Near East and North Africa. Asia and Pacific Consortium for Agricultural Biodiversity (APCoAB) was invited to share its experiences in the Asia-Pacific region and explore the areas of interregional collaboration with the new network.

Eighteen agricultural biotechnology experts from 14 countries of the region (Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen) besides representatives from AARINENA, FAO, GFAR, ICARDA and APCoAB, participated in the consultation meeting. The program was organized under three sessions; I) Opening Session, II) Status of Agricultural Biotechnology in the Region, and III) Establishment of Agricultural Biotechnology Network. The participants made presentations on the status of agricultural biotechnology in their respective countries and gave specific suggestions on the

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establishment of a network on agricultural biotechnology in the region. This was followed by presentation of the proposal by Dr. I. Hamdan, Executive Secretary, AARINENA for the establishment of Regional Network for Agricultural Biotechnology in the Near East and North Africa. The proposal was adopted unanimously following which decisions were taken on the location of the network Secretariat, various office bearers, technical working groups and a program of activities to be taken up in the immediate future.

The participants selected Agricultural Genetic Engineering Research Institute (AGERI)-Agricultural Research Center (ARC), Egypt to be the venue for the Network Secretariat and elected the following officers:

- Dr. Magdi Madkour From AGERI as the Network Secretary,
- Dr. Yousef 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 in 2008:

- Marker Aided Selection and Biosafety to be held by APCoAB in Malaysia
- Bioinformatics Training Course to be held by AARINENA at AGERI-Egypt



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