

## Day Two: What Are the Challenges We Need to Address?

## Shared Vision for Change



GCARD Daily News presents a few highlights of each day. GCARD seeks to begin a transformation in agricultural research to meet the enormous challenges of doubling the food supply over the next 40 years and doing so in ways that are environmentally sustainable.

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## QUOTABLES

"The researchers need to work with producers at their farms and listen to their problems with the clear notion that they are not coming to bring us a recipe, but that we will learn from them as they will learn from us." —Edison Betancourt, Uruguayan farmer

"Publish or perish should make way for impact or perish." —Dr. Kevin Cleaver, IFAD

"If the international community placed agriculture at the same level as environment, at the same level as health, at the same level as education, then a lot of the policies that are keeping agriculture 'backwards' in developing countries would be changed." —Dr. Namanga Ngongi, AGRA



Dr. Monty Jones, Incoming Chair of GFAR and Executive Director of FARA, set the scene for the second day by emphasizing the responsibility of participants to represent the needs of the hundreds of millions of resource-poor farmers, livestock keepers, fish producers, and forest dwellers who are not at the meeting.

Dr. Jones outlined reasons why research has failed to achieve adequate impact to date in order to urge participants to enact change. These included: under investment in research and capacity; fragmentation of the players in AR4D; research not being adequately linked to other sectors that would leverage better impact, such as markets and infrastructure; a lack of accountability of researchers to the end users; and underexploited opportunities for collaboration (North-South and South-South).

His "wish list" of outcomes of the meeting included establishment of GCARD as an inclusive platform; validation of the CGIAR's priority research areas; learning and networking; and development of a road map for reorienting agricultural research to better meet the needs of the poor.

"The first GCARD is being held at a time when developing- country agriculture is commanding the highest attention in over four decades. This attention is certain to wane in the coming years. We must make hay while the sun shines," he concluded.

In a video address, David Nabarro, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Food Security and Nutrition, touched on the absolute need to get food systems working properly in ways to enable the world's poorest people to obtain food security. "Conditions that led to the food crisis in 2008 are still with us in 2010," he said.

## Building From Regional Expressions of Demand

In 2009, a global consultation process involving over 2,000 stakeholders from 200 countries around the world was launched to "check the pulse" of the global agricultural research system and map out regional AR4D priorities in order to ensure a more cohesive global research agenda. The outcomes of these consultations were captured in a series of regional summaries presented to participants at GCARD on Monday.

As expected, each region had different priorities and goals for the future of AR4D. For example, water issues and desertification were front and center for both Central Asia & the Caucasus (CACAARI) and West Asia & North Africa (AARINENA), while the Latin America/Caribbean (FORAGRO) emphasized focus on family agriculture and the need to involve more indigenous and small farmers. The regional consultation from Europe (EFARD) remarked on the need for greater AR4D to address poverty in Eastern Europe.

However, several overlapping themes and priorities were echoed throughout the morning, perhaps most notably the disconnect between international priorities and national strategies, in addition to the impacts of climate change and the need for rapid development of adaptation and mitigation technologies. Other common challenges included increasing population growth, water scarcity, disconnect between researchers and extension, and the gender divide. Also stressed by several presenters was the need for renewed and/or ramped up presence of the CGIAR in the regions.

Cross-cutting solutions across regions included the need to scale "up and out" new technologies, work with new partners, and increased capacity on innovation.

Dr. Ann Tutwiler, Senior Advisor on Food Security at USDA emphasized that in order to provide solutions to the myriad of challenges facing developing countries AR4D, national governments must have the political will to build their own enabling environments.

## CGIAR Consortium Plenary Presentation

The afternoon session on collective efforts in international agricultural research was conceived as a linkage with the regional discussions from the morning. Dr. Colin Chartres, Director General of IWMI, gave a presentation on the CGIAR perspectives on partnerships, outlining the challenges and opportunities based on concrete examples of the CGIAR's work with regional partners.

Chartres acknowledged that the CGIAR was a small player in the AR4D system and that expectations often exceed what the CGIAR can and should deliver.

He acknowledged that the current GCARD process is critical to the design of the new Mega Programmes, even though some donors have raised concerns about lack of progress.

The CGIAR's role should focus on the development of international public goods and addressing complex problems at the intersection of poverty, food security, and environmental risks, he said.

"We can also serve as an honest broker and intermediary between countries," he added. "Because we are small, we can also act as a catalyst, helping nations adapt and adopt global public goods developed elsewhere."

Looking ahead, the CGIAR will focus on producing more demand driven, product-oriented research outputs, with greater focus on coordination and continued emphasis on partnerships.

During the discussion session, participants highlighted low farmer involvement in the design and implementation of programs and suggested that the Centers include more farmers on their boards

and management committees, and incorporate indigenous knowledge into the research cycle.

## Transforming Agriculture Research for Development

A comprehensive report building on knowledge obtained from the regional consultations and including references to some 300 articles was formally presented to GCARD stakeholders today for review.

Prepared by a team of experts led by Uma Lele, former Senior Advisor to the World Bank, and including Eugene Terry, Eduardo Trigo and Jules Pretty, the report provides a roadmap for massive reform of the architecture of what it terms a currently "fragmented global system of research and development."

"The low hanging fruit of the green revolution has already been harvested, so the challenges we have now are substantially larger," said Lele. "We are all saying that it is time for a departure from business as usual. What would 'business as *unusual*' mean?"

According to the authors, agriculture is highly context-specific and needs to move away from the expectation that research advances can be applied as one recipe—or single models as silver bullets—developed globally and applied locally.

Lele emphasized that national stakeholders can and must build up their capacity if there is any hope of tackling the problem of food insecurity. She added, "if we are serious about reaching a billion people, we better not be exclusive about which technologies to use."

The participants were charged with suggesting new ideas for ensuring AR4D reaches farmers. A particularly compelling idea was to develop a demand index to measure the relevance of the work with farmers.

## CGIAR and Agropolis Foundation Awards

On Monday evening, the CGIAR presented awards to international teams and individuals from the CGIAR Centers for their outstanding contribution to the international agricultural research community. Winners included:

- **Dr. Parminder Virk**, Senior Scientist in plant breeding at IIRRI, received the Outstanding Scientific Support Team award on behalf of the team.
- **Dr. William Dar**, Director General of ICRISAT, received the Outstanding Partnership Award on behalf of his Center.
- **Dr. Abdou Tenkaouano**, Director of the World Vegetable Center's Africa office, accepted the award for Outstanding Partnership in addition to their ICRISAT colleagues.
- **Dr. Jonne Rodenburg**, Scientist for the Africa Rice Center in Tanzania, collected the Young Promising Scientist award.
- **Dr. David Molden**, Deputy Director General of Research, Global Change, Water and Environment of IWMI, received the Outstanding Scientist award.
- **Dr. Paul Van Mele**, a learning and innovation systems specialist from the Africa Rice Center, was named as the winner of the Outstanding Communications award.
- **Busani Bafana**, an agricultural correspondent and journalist for IPS Africa, received the award for Outstanding Agricultural Journalism.
- **Dr. Achim Dobermann**, Deputy Director General of IIRRI, received the award for Outstanding Article on behalf of **Dr. Roland Buresh** of IIRRI, who was one of two selected to receive this honor.
- **Dr. John Hoddinott**, Senior Research Fellow at IFPRI received the award for Outstanding Article.

The Agropolis Foundation also announced the winners of two scientific awards. The 2010 Louis Malassis Young Promising Scientist Award went to **Dr. Silvia Restrepo**, Associate Professor at the University of Los Andes in Bogota Colombia, for her work in identifying alternative methods to combat plant diseases. This year's Louis Malassis International Scientific Distinguished Scientist Award went to **Dr. Ken Sayre**, Regional Agronomist for Asia at CIMMYT, for his work in training both farmers and agronomists to implement new bed-planting technologies for both irrigated and rain-fed crop systems.

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