

FOREWORD

This study was initiated as a result of a joint agreement between the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near

precise, reliable, and updated information on the national agricultural research systems (NARSs) in the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region which is essential for leaders of national and international scientific, technical and financial organizations concerned with agricultural research in the region for three main reasons.

- It will help the NARS leaders to better assess their own situation since a complete updated NARS presentation had not been available, and to enable them to compare their NARS with that of other countries.
- It should facilitate the development of international scientific collaboration among the NARSs and between the NARSs and the international scientific community, especially that of developed Mediterranean/European countries and of international and regional scientific/technical institutions (ICARDA, FAO, AARINENA, CIHEAM, ACSAD, AOAD, etc.) concerned with collaboration in agricultural sciences.
- It should focus the attention of national and international authorities on the large progress of the NARSs, especially of their main research institutes, observed over the past decades, and also on their more acute current weaknesses and constraints which need to be resolved in order to reinforce the capacity of the NARSs in supporting accelerated and sustainable agricultural development in the region through the generation of significant technical innovations and reliable knowledge on natural resources and rural socioeconomics.

Considering its regional programs and offices in the WANA sub-regions and its close interaction with the WANA NARSs, it was agreed that ICARDA would implement the study. The study was launched in February 1997 when Dr Joseph Casas, Research Director at the National Agricultural Research Institute (INRA) of France, was designated as its scientific leader. He was selected because of his extensive experience in NARS analysis and planning in developing countries, including countries in the WANA region, and his past experiences with CIHEAM (member of the Scientific Council), FAO (long collaboration with the Research and Technology Development Service), and ICARDA (member of the Board of Trustees).

During the initial months of the study (February-April 1997), the first drafts of the NARS monographs were prepared by national teams and were briefly presented at an

the Mediterranean and Near-East Count 7 May 1997, and
organized by CIHEAM in collaboration with AARINENA, FAO, and ICARDA. This seminar offered the opportunity to review the advancement of the preparation of the monographs, to resolve some methodological issues, and to get feedback/comments from all participants, especially from the national teams or leaders.

After the seminar, a long process of extensive exchanges began as well as collaboration to complete the study. This process involved the national teams, Dr Joseph Casas, and ICARDA staff members, mainly Dr Mahmoud Solh, Assistant

Director General for International Cooperation, who insured constant follow-up of the study; Dr Hala Hafez, ICARDA Consultant, who improved, finalized and edited the publication and participated actively in preparing some of the monographs; and the Regional Coordinators: Dr Mohamed El Mourid (North Africa), Dr Nasri Haddad (Nile Valley and Red Sea), Dr Habib Halila (West Asia), Dr John Peacock (Arabian Peninsula), and Drs Habib Ketata, Suren P.S. Beniwal and Muhammed Tahir (Highlands).

A period of more than two years was necessary for preparing the publication in its present form. Although it appears to be a long time, it was required for developing the final versions of the monographs (presented in Chapters 4 to 8) in a satisfactory and harmonized form, and in a form that was fully acceptable to the NARSs, such that the monographs provide a concise, comprehensive, and critical view of the NARSs, their scientific and technical institutions, resources, research activities, and relations with development. It is worth mentioning that these final versions required an average of eight successive drafts, from which it was possible to present an accurate, sound cross-country analysis of these NARSs.

The results of this study, presented in this publication, were well worth the efforts put forth. We are confident that, in the future, they will serve the objectives mentioned above. However, it goes without saying that, in order to fully realize the intended benefits, the study should be periodically updated. The leading role in this regard will be taken by AARINENA.

On behalf of the various stakeholders, I would like to thank the NARS leaders and teams who participated in the study and to extend my appreciation to Dr Joseph Casas for the time and effort he dedicated to the study, as well as to Dr Mahmoud Solh, Dr Hala Hafez, and ICARDA Regional Coordinators for their valuable contribution to the study. Appreciation is also expressed to INRA/France for its support of the study and

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- Dr Enzo Chioccioli, Secretary General, and Dr Placido Plaza, Administrator General, CIHEAM, Paris.

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