



ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY
ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE AFRICAINE

SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND RESEARCH COMMISSION
COMMISSION SCIENTIFIQUE, TECHNIQUE ET
DE LA RECHERCHE



Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development
Recherche et Developpement des Cultures Vivrières dans les Zones Semi-Arides

630.7
SAF

REPORT OF THE SEVENTH
SAFGRAD OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
28-29 NOVEMBER, 1991
OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO

Bibliothèque UA/SAFGRAD
01 BP. 1783 Ouagadougou 01
Tél. 30 - 60 - 71 / 31 - 15 - 98
Burkina Faso

DRAFT

3881

630.7
SAF - 42

Coordination Office/Bureau de Coordination
SAFGRAD
01 B. P. 1783, Ouagadougou 01
Burkina Faso
Tél. 30-60-71 / 30-60-72
Télex : 5381 BF

REPORT OF THE SEVENTH SAFGRAD OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
28 - 29 NOVEMBER, 1991
OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO

1.0. The seventh meeting of the SAFGRAD Oversight Committee was held on 28-30 November, 1991 in the conference room of SAFGRAD Coordination Office in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The meeting was attended by the following:

1.1. Members of the Oversight Committee

Mr. Hector Mercer-Quarshie, Vice Chairman (Ag. Chairman)
Dr. Jacob A. Ayuk-Takem
Dr. Ibrahim Babiker
Dr. Da Sansan (French Rapporteur)
Prof. Alphonse M. Emechebe (English Rapporteur)
Dr. Joseph M. Menyonga, International Coordinator
Dr. Richard Ndoni

1.2. Observers

Dr. Taye Bezuneh, Director of Research
Dr. Gerbrand Kingma, USAID/SAFGRAD Senior Project Adviser
Dr. Joseph M. Fajemisin, IITA Representative and
Coordinator, Maize Network
Dr. Nyanguila Muleba, Coordinator, Cowpea Network
Dr. James Olukosi, Interim Coordinator, West African
Farming Systems Research Network
Mr. Emmanuel A. Odonkor, Administrative & Finance Officer
Mr. Evenunye Adanlete, Accountant
Dr. Wilbur Thomas, Representative, USAID/Burkina Faso

3881

42

2.0. Opening

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Mercer-Quarshie, served as the Chairman. In his opening remarks, the Acting Chairman noted that the fact that there was no question about the chairmanship of the meeting, in the absence of the substantive Chairman, was an eloquent testimony to an earlier decision by the Oversight Committee (OC) to elect a Vice-Chairman. The Ag. Chairman noted that the present meeting would deliberate on important developments since the last meeting. He observed that SAFGRAD was in its transitional phase that is shrouded with uncertainty, but opined that there was probably no cause for alarm, given the recent donor-instituted external evaluation report which was very positive.

2.1. Remarks by Representative of IITA

In his capacity as the IITA Representative, the Team Leader of SAFGRAD/IITA, Dr. Joseph M. Fajemisin, welcomed members to the meeting. He informed the meeting that he has still expecting the arrival for the meeting of another official of IITA from the Ibadan Headquarters (either Dr. J.P. Ekebil himself or Mr. E. Deganus). Meanwhile, Dr. Fajemisin conveyed to the meeting the good wishes of both the Director General of IITA (Dr. Lucas Brader) and the Deputy Director General, International Cooperation (Dr. J.P. Ekebil). He expressed his profound delight with the positive external evaluation report and assured the meeting that the IITA regards the success of SAFGRAD as its (IITA's) success, since both organizations have the same goals, i.e. service to the African farmers.

3.0. Adoption of the Agenda

The provisional agenda was adopted with minor amendments. It was agreed to insert "under any other matters" a fourth item- "SAFGRAD Annual Report". Also a new item: "Approval of draft minutes and formulation of recommendations" was slated for Saturday (30/11/91) at 10:00 hours.

4.0. Adoption of minutes of Sixth Meeting

Minustes 13.5 on page 10: "Third NARS Director's Conference", was amended to read as follows:

"This would have taken place early in 1991 but had to be postponed because of the imminent final evaluation of SAFGRAD II, the outcome of which could not be predicted. With the outcome of the final evaluation known, the conference would be scheduled to take place in September or October, 1991".

Subject to the above amendment, the minutes and the recommendations were adopted, a motion to that effect having been moved by Dr. Ayuk-Takem who was seconded by Dr. Ndondi.

5.0. Matters Arising from Minutes for Last Meeting

5.1. Minutes 5.0., second paragraph

In answer to a question on the subject, the International Coordinator informed the meeting that the SCO had not been advised about the response of the French Minister of Cooperation to the letter written to him by the Secretary General (S.G.) of OAU about the need for the existence of one maize network in West and Central Africa; the chances are that the Minister has not replied to the SG's letter.

5.2. Minute 7.0., page 5, 3rd paragraph

With respect to the OC directive that an audited account be presented to it, the Administration and Finance Officer reported that an audited account was indeed submitted to the International Coordinator but that the latter inadvertently did not submit it to the OC. However an audited account will be available at the present meeting.

5.3. Minute 8.0., items (i) and (ii) on page 6

The SCO confirmed that Managements of both IITA and ICRISAT were invited to the present meeting. While IITA had accepted the invitation, no reply had been received from ICRISAT. Also the Director of Research and the USAID/SAFGRAD Senior Project Adviser had held discussions, at various levels, with IITA at Ibadan on implementation of collaborative research projects. Regarding the absence of the two SAFGRAD/ICRISAT Coordinators it was agreed that it was not mandatory for them to attend the present meeting, since there was no item on the agenda that requires their presence.

It was further noted that the two Coordinators have maintained a harmonious relationship with the SCO, in addition to providing sound technical leadership to their Networks. However, it was agreed that there is need to improve on the present level of dialogue. Communication with the Management of ICRISAT, especially as the Executive Director of ICRISAT Sahelian Centre, Niamey (apparently charged with overall responsibility for the West and Central Africa Sorghum Network) has not been readily forthcoming in this regard.

It was decided that the fact that ICRISAT has a new Director General (DG) should be exploited in our effort to improve relationship with policy makers of that institute. In this respect, a letter should be jointly written by USAID Burkina and the International Coordinator to welcome the new DG and advise him about their expectations with regard to ICRISAT's role as specified in the project document. Meanwhile, advantage should be taken of the expected visit of the new DG to West Africa.

5.4. Minute 9.0., 3rd paragraph

The SCO reported that copies of OC's Internal Appraisal of SAFGRAD Networks have been distributed to the individuals and organizations specified in the above paragraph.

5.5. Minute_13.1

The Vice-Chairman attended the Inter-Network Conference in Niamey (7-14 March, 1991) as the official Representative of the OC.

5.6. Minute_13.2., last two sentences on p. 10.

The SCO informed the Committee that there has been informal contacts with some IARCs on the question of their envisaged geo-political mandate zones. With the exception of one or two centres, most IARCs have not implemented the TAC initiative. The Committee decided that it is necessary to get an update of the present state of affairs by studying the report of the October 1991 Centres' Week meeting held in Washington D.C. This will enable the Committee to address those issues relevant to African agriculture.

5.7. Minute_13.4.

The SCO informed the Committee that it was preparing specific guidelines on rules and regulations for the various management entities, including means of renewing memberships of steering committees. The guidelines will first be submitted to the next meetings of steering committees before they are presented to the OC at its next meeting.

5.8. General_observation

The OC agreed that it would like to see matters arising from minutes extracted from the minutes and listed appropriately in the agenda; this will expedite discussions.

6.0. Report_of_the_International_Coordinator

The International Coordinator's report outlined SAFGRAD's activities since the sixth meeting of the OC in February 1991. The areas covered included:

- the inter-network conference, 7 - 14 March, 1991.
- activities of the 4 commodity networks and those of WAFSRN (RESPAD) and Semi-Arid Lowlands of West Africa (SALWA) Agro-Forestry Network.
- final USAID evaluation of SAFGRAD II.
- internal OAU meeting on SAFGRAD held at the OAU General Secretariat in Addis Ababa on September 17-19, 1991.
- other activities and issues, viz ACPO/Togo programme, Special Programme for African Agricultural Research (SPAAR), office space for SCO, OAU's in-kind contribution to SAFGRAD, staff situation, and future of SAFGRAD.

The OC commended the International Coordinator for the good report. After noting with sympathy and regret the loss of valuable germplasm and research equipment at the Nasreth Station of the Institute of Agricultural Research of Ethiopia to vandals during the internal conflict earlier this year, OC agreed that the Coordinator and the EARSAM Network Steering Committee should be written by the SCO. Among other things, the Ethiopian NARS should be asked to itemize the germplasm materials and the research equipment lost during the conflict. This will enable a fuller appreciation of the extent of their loss so that various individuals and organizations could decide how best to assist the Ethiopian NARS. The offer by the Coordinator of RENACO (Dr. Muleba) to help in replacing lost cowpea germplasm was gratefully received by the OC.

With respect to SPAAR, the OC noted that SPAAR has been giving rise to unfulfilled expectations among the NARS. Those members of OC that would attend the December 4-5 meeting of SPAAR in Rome were mandated to emphasize that SPAAR needs to be seen to facilitate provision of funds to NARS. In addition, SPAAR should find ways and means of sustaining those regional networking programmes which have been effective.

The Vice Chairman reported that the inter-network conference, at which he represented the OC, was a huge success. This was noted by the OC as was the report that the WAFSRN will give a course for English speakers in 1992 at the Institute for Agricultural Research, Zaria, Nigeria. It was also noted that SALWA has been operating only in four countries because of financial constraints; other Sahelian countries in West Africa would hopefully be covered in the next phase.

In discussing the ICRISAT Millet Network, the OC felt that it would have been preferable if the network is brought under SAFGRAD Management. Having noted that the network has been interacting amicably with the SCO, the OC agreed that network be allowed to develop but that the Council of NARDs be asked to deliberate on the issue with a view to it directing that the ICRISAT Millet Network be fully integrated into the SAFGRAD system of networks.

In reaction to the agreement (signed on 22 February 1991) between OAU/STRC and the French Government for a total of 66.25 million FCFA for a 2-year support to the ACPD/Togo Programme, the OC asked the SCO to provide periodic reports on the activities of the Programme.

7.0. Report of Director of Research on "Final Evaluation of SAFGRAD II : Analysis of Some Technical Issues"

The report highlighted the following issues:

- (i) Setting of network research priorities;
- (ii) Flow of germplasm and related technologies via Networks;
- (iii) Collaborative projects;
- (iv) Inter-networking

- (v) Impact assessment study; and
- (vi) Network planning for developing research project activities.

Reacting to the comment that network programme priorities lacked both socio-economic impact orientation and disciplinary balance the OC agreed that in future renewals of membership of steering committees, at least one socio-economist should be elected, or coopted, into each steering committee. In addition, socio-economic projects should be included in the design of SAFGRAD III. The WAFSRN would also be requested to advise the crop-commodity network on design and implementation of socio-economic studies; that network could also be asked to conduct socio-economic studies relevant to the crop-commodity networks.

The OC agreed with the external review team that in future the networks should analyze data from regional trials across both locations and years, to facilitate drawing of inferences.

Regarding inter-networking, the OC decided that internetwork subject-matter task forces be created to tackle problems that cut across two or more networks, especially during the design phase of SAFGRAD III, when it is expected that scientists working on various networks would assemble in the same venue.

In discussing the importance of proper project formulation, the OC noted that well-formulated projects attract donor funds more easily than poorly formulated ones. It was also noted that it is important that projects are fully discussed with those that are expected to implement them. In this regard, the Network Coordinators should immediately commence work of developing and selected members of the steering committee projects (based on previously identified constraints) which will

be scrutinized and further elaborated by the very next respective steering committees meetings to which resource persons could be invited. The projects endorsed by the steering committees would then be submitted to the Director of Research; the latter would subsequently engage the services of an expert in project formulation to finalize the proposals.

Finally, it was observed that the external review report contained a number of technical inaccuracies and misrepresentation of facts, both of which were very probably inadvertent. For example, it is not true (as is stated on page 5, paragraph 2), that SAFGRAD Maize Scientists concentrated their efforts in breeding Maize varieties for well-watered, fertile conditions rather than to the stressful and low-input situation of most small farmers in semi-arid Africa.

A major proportion of the collaborative research activities was on the development of drought resistant/tolerant Maize varieties. The extra-early varieties developed under the SAFGRAD project were bred for the stressful (less than 800 mm of rainfall) environments. In addition, the tied ridges technology for semi-arid environments were research upon by SAFGRAD at Kamboinse Station in Burkina Faso in the 1980s. This technology has been adopted in Cameroon, Benin, Togo and other countries.

The OC agreed that copies of the entire external evaluation report be made available to its members so that they can scrutinize it and submit their views at its next meeting.

8.0. Report of the USAID/SAFGRAD Senior Adviser on "Research Management Recommendations Based on the Research Management Analysis of SAFGRAD II Final Evaluation"

(c) SAFGRAD to serve as a Semi-Autonomous Agricultural Research Coordination Bureau of OAU.

(b) SAFGRAD to be transformed into a Permanent OAU Bureau for Agricultural Research.

(a) The Status Quo: SAFGRAD to remain as a Semi-Autonomous Project under the OAU Umbrella.

The OAU General Secretariat organized an internal meeting on SAFGRAD on 17-19 September, 1991, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The main object of the meeting was to deliberate on the future structure of SAFGRAD. The meeting considered the advantages and disadvantages of the following three alternative structures:

9.0. Report by the International Coordinator on the OAU Internal Meeting on SAFGRAD

The DC gratefully noted the above suggestions by the Senior Project Adviser but deferred their further discussion to the next DC meeting.

- transfer of networks' leadership to NARS.

- need for the SCD to improve subject matter documentation and to develop more contacts to publicize SAFGRAD achievements; and

- non-involvement of the SCD in analysis and interpretation of research results or in drawing implications of research results;

- stepwise elimination of constraints during project formulation;

The presentation focused on perceived management issues in the above report. Areas covered included:

The meeting adopted alternative (c) as a short and medium term measure and recommended increased involvement of the OAU in the funding of SAFGRAD. Specifically, it was recommended that in the short term a core administrative staff of the SCO be funded by the General Secretariat as from June 1, 1992. In the medium term, the General Secretariat should additionally take charge of the technical facet of the Office to ensure and reinforce SAFGRAD's self-managing capability in assuming regional coordination. In the long term, and within the context of African Economic Community, the General Secretariat should plan to transform SAFGRAD into an institution which would advise, elaborate and implement food and agricultural research policy of Africa.

The IITA Representative at the Meeting expressed the Institute's happiness over the enhanced financial and political support of SAFGRAD by the OAU. The OC expressed its very pleasant surprise about the development and commended the SCO for the hard work that culminated in the hearty development. The OC thanked the OAU Secretary General for the momentous decision. It was hoped that both the SCO and the OC would live up to the expectations of the General Secretariat of the OAU. On the basis of information volunteered by the SCO, the OC commended one of its members (Prof. A.M. Emechebe) for his input in preparing the document used in the above meeting.

10.0. Vice Chairman's Report on the Joint Maize-Cowpea-Sorghum Steering Committee Meeting, Nov. 11-14, 1991 in Ouagadougou

The Vice Chairman of the OC attended above meeting as the representative of the OC in order to encourage members of the steering committee (some of whom were new, having been elected only in March 1991) to take their important responsibilities seriously.

His report was favourable and he was commended by the other members of the OC for his contributions at the above meeting and for providing a written report.

11.0 Up-date Report on WAFSRN (RESPAO) by the Interim Network Coordinator

The Interim Coordinator of RESPAO (Dr. James Olukosi) provided an up-date of the status of the Network and the efforts being made to answer questions raised by the donors, with the hope of convincing the latter about the continued relevance of the Network. He then presented a list of the Network's major activities.

In answering a question, the Interim Coordinator emphasized the interdependence between the WAFSRN and West and Central African crop-commodity Networks. He assured the OC that his Network would like to establish close interaction with crop-commodity networks. He was commended for his presentation.

12.0. Current USAID Trends in African Agricultural Research - An Address by Dr. Wilbur Thomas, USAID Representative in Burkina Faso.

The Representative indicated four areas he has handled during the past 3-4 months in his interaction with his colleagues in Washington:

- Dialogue with policy makers in Washington, about the necessity for continued support of African agricultural research.
- Dialogue with agricultural researchers in Africa about the need to demonstrate commitment to their work.
- Agricultural research must be demand driven; this may be difficult to demonstrate at present in Africa but increased private sector involvement may make this realisable.

- Need to involve international development community in funding agricultural research; they need to be lobbied and convinced that the hope for the future lies in agricultural research investment.

The following are taken into consideration by USAID in deciding whether to support agricultural research by the NARS:

- NARS must prioritize research
- NARS must formulate integrated agricultural research to avoid wasteful duplication
- Agricultural research must contribute to public policy
- There should be clear government policy aimed at promoting agricultural research.

The Representative then proffered a few criticisms of NARS agricultural research networks:

- Not much impact from agricultural research networks: there is need to show results periodically
- Poorly defined role of NARS: NARS should be central to planning, execution and management of agricultural research networks. Obviously this will take time to realize in some NARS.

Having made the above observations, the USAID Representative informed the OC that the USAID Burkina Faso has proposed to AID Washington that SAFGRAD be extended beyond its present phase. He opined that SPAAR must be regarded as a concept and not a funding source, there being three such sources:

- domestic resources (of individual countries)
- bilateral programmes
- international and regional programmes.

He then announced that he was informed over the telephone two days earlier that SAFGRAD had been given favourable technical review by policy makers in Washington. This will be translated into funds, for which official signed documents are expected within the next three weeks. This announcement was greeted with a resounding ovation by the OC.

The USAID Representative ended his address as follows:

- (i) USAID is still committed to funding agricultural research
- (ii) Most USAID assistance will go to NARS, SAFGRAD being regarded as a component of NARS
- (iii) USAID prefers to invest in programmes that will influence policy towards greater development
- (iv) USAID would give preferential consideration to programmes that have potential for impact
- (v) USAID will encourage research agenda that has prospects of sustainability in terms of financial support from the private sector of respective countries and definite and enhanced financial commitment by national governments.

While thanking the Representative for his inspiring presentation, the OC assured him that a lot has been accomplished by member countries since the late 1960s, especially in the area of research manpower development. The

OC reaffirmed that steps will be taken to effect an impact assessment study of SAFGRAD. It was noted that this was not done before the final evaluation of SAFGRAD II because it was not specifically required as one of the goals of the project document.

13.0. Training Course in Scientific Writing for Agricultural Research Scientists - Presented by the International Coordinator

The report of the course held in Lome, Togo, from 17-30 November 1991, was tabled by the International Coordinator. Important components of the presentation included:

- Funding of the course (by 4 donors: USAID, CTA, IFS and FAC);
- Selection of participants (20 selected from 8 countries out of 67 applicants from 12 countries in West and Central Africa);
- Resource persons; and
- Future plans.

The paper was well received and the SCO was commended for its initiative in organizing the course jointly with WARDA (West African Rice Development Association) and African Association of Science Editors (AASE).

However, the OC was anxious about the fate of the participants who may have great difficulties in leaving Togo for their respective countries because of the political situation in that country. The OC requested the International Coordinator to establish contact with Lome through either the

USAID Burkina Faso or CBC. The International Coordinator immediately took action and later reported that attempts would be made to evacuate the participants to Cotonou from where their flights could be re-routed by SCO. The OC was worried over the personal safety of the participants and by the fact that there was no provision for funds to cater for their extended stay, should they be trapped in Togo after 1 December, 1991.

In concluding discussion of the above report, it was recommended that in future the nominations made by various networks should be considered. If possible, a similar course should be planned for Eastern and Southern Africa.

14.0. Future Activities of SAFGRAD - Presented by the Director of Research

Several activities were presented as indicated below

14.1 Introduction to Impact Assessment Study of SAFGRAD Network

This was a comprehensive paper that comprised the following:

- (i) Background
- (ii) Objectives (8 principal objectives)
- (iii) Key Elements of the Impact Study:
 - Technology generation and diffusion
 - Farm-level impact through NARS
 - Professional development
 - Enhancement of NARS leadership development.

(iv) Strategy:

- Gathering general information
- Sensitizing Network Steering Committee
- Field verification surveys
- Technical working group meetings

(v) Tentative Schedule for the Impact Assessment Study

The OC commended the Director of Research for his initiative but noted the need for a critical look at methods of effecting study of farm-level impact of technology. It was agreed that the consultant that will design the detailed questionnaire will be required to pay special attention to the above aspect.

14.2. Institutionalization of SAFGRAD

The paper was the main document used in the OAU Internal Meeting on SAFGRAD (see 9.0. above). Having noted this, the OC again thanked the Director of Research for the detailed paper. It was noted that deliberation should ideally be restricted to what is needed to ensure that SAFGRAD serves as a "Semi-autonomous Agricultural Coordination Bureau of OAU".

In view of the above, it was decided to defer further discussion of the subject until we are certain in concrete terms the level of financial commitment by our principal donor (USAID) and financial and political commitment by the OAU.

14.3 How do we influence Agricultural research policy issues in Africa ?

The OC agreed tha this question should be discussed at the beginning of SAFGRAD III and be incorporated as a component of that phase of SAFGRAD.

14.4. Inter-networking

This issue was again discussed. It was agreed that a meeting of the Network Coordinators and the Director of Research to consider inter-network matters (especially researchable issues) should be the next cropping season.

15.0. Report of the Administration and Finance Officer on "Global Financial Report of SAFGRAD II, 1986-1991"

The comprehensive report was an update of the detailed report presented at the sixth meeting of the OC in February, 1991. It was noted that the report was professionally prepared and provided the type of details required by the OC. The Administration and Finance Officer was commended for the report.

On the question of in-kind contributions by the member countries of the SAFGRAD, the Accountant indicated that questionnaires had been sent to 10 countries but replies had only been received from less than 50% of these countries. An auditor has been hired to visit these 10 countries to susbtantiate the answers and to advise NARS on a suitable procedure for future accounts.

The OC raised several questions about the proposed visit to the 10 NARS by the auditor. One important issue is how to estimate salaries of NARS scientist working in countries in which national salaries are endicrously low relative to international staff salaries or even those of NARS countries with much higher salaries. It was agreed that in computing staff salaries, the local salaries should be weighted with a factor that takes into consideration the disparities between the salaries, but based on qualification and experience. The Accountant was requested to advise the auditor on the matter before the latter starts his assignment.

An OAU internal audit report for the period 1/10/89 - 31/5/90 was circulated at the end of the Accountant's presentation. The OC was informed that an audit report for up to September 30, 1991 was in final stages of preparation.

Regardless of the above, the OC asked that in future important documents like audit reports should be circulated well before they are presented to enable members to study them thoroughly. In addition, the SCO responses to audit queries should form part of future financial reports.

16.0 Activating the Sponsoring Group of SAFGRAD - A report presented by the Director of Research

The brief report traced the background of the "Sponsoring Group" before making suggestions on the functions and composition of the Group.

After careful deliberations, the OC agreed that the functions of the Sponsoring Group should include:

- to raise funds for project activities,
- to influence policies in agricultural research and development,

The Director of Research was commended for his initiative.

The Group will meet once every 3 years (or as deemed necessary), the Secretary General of OAU being the convenor.

- (i) The Secretary General of OAU - Chairman
- (ii) Two Ministers representing West Africa
- (iii) One Minister representing Central Africa
- (iv) Two Ministers representing Eastern and Southern Africa
- (v) Representative of ECA
- (vi) Donor representatives (e.g., USAID, IFAD, IDRC, FAC, Ford Foundation, etc.)
- (vii) Chairman of Oversight Committee
- (viii) Four NARDS, one each for West, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa.

The membership of the Group will comprise:

- to oversee accountability of project activities
- to receive and discuss financial and administrative reports,
- to review project, and
- to provide guidance to SAFGRAD to discharge its role as an African Research Promotion and Coordination Agency.

17.1. Date of OC Meeting that will precede that of the Council of National Agricultural Research Directors

The second half of April 1992. The OC to meet for 3-4 days before the Council of Directors' meeting. Tentatively the OC will meet on 20-21 April, 1992 so that their report will be written on April 22, 1991. The Council of NARDs will then meet on 23-24 April, 1992.

17.2. SAFGRAD Annual Report

The OC decided that the SCO should produce good quality annual reports as a means of publicizing SAFGRAD activities. The first one for 1991 should be extracted from the Terminal Report of SAFGRAD II.

18.0 Deliberations at the Closed Session

18.1. Report of the OC to the Council of Directors

A draft proposal of the components of the report was discussed. It was agreed that the report will comprise seven main sections, excluding an executive summary. The captions of the 8 main sections are as follows:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Major Activities of OC : 1987-1991
- Network Matters
- Important Documents Prepared by the OAU/STRC-SAFGRAD Coordination Office in Collaboration with OC

- Highlight of Reports of Donors-instituted External Reviews of SAFGRAD
- Overview of Financial Status of SAFGRAD II
- Prospects and Promises for the Future of SAFGRAD

The OC decided that the report should be written, printed and sent to members of the Council early enough for each to receive his/her copy before they leave for their meeting in April, 1992. Consequently, the Committee requested its two rapporteurs (Prof. A.M. Emechebe and Dr. Da Sansan) to prepare the report in both French and English in one week in the SCO sometime in the later half of January, 1992. The OC further requested its Vice-Chairman to join the rapporteurs in the SCO to review their report before it is finally printed (in both languages). The Director of Research will assist members of the OC during all stages of preparation of the report.

It was agreed that the rapporteurs would commence their assignment on January 23, 1992. They would be joined by the Vice Chairman on January 30; if all goes well the report would be submitted to the SCO on January 31.

18.2 Merit Awards for Scientific Achievements

The subject was raised by the Director of Research. It was noted that the OAU/STRC Executive Secretary introduced the commendable innovation of giving awards to deserving NARS scientists during the March 7-14, 1991, Niamey inter-network conference. The Director of Research recommended that some monetary value be attached to such awards, through institutionalization of an appropriate Trust Fund. The OC welcomed the idea but deferred further deliberation on it till its next meeting.

I. Recommendations

The Oversight Committee (OC) of SAFGRAD, at its 7th meeting held in Ouagadougou from 28-30 November, 1991 made the following recommendations.

Following lengthy discussion on the rationale for, and the necessity to undertake, an impact assessment study of SAFGRAD activities, the Oversight Committee (OC) recommends that study be executed but it should largely focus on the SAFGRAD II project outputs. Specifically, emphasis should be placed on specific contribution of networks in strengthening research capabilities of national agricultural research systems of participating countries and on evaluation of on-farm level-impact of network technologies in improving production and productivity of food grains (namely maize, sorghum, millet and cowpea). The study should also determine how best to re-orient future network activities in order make them more responsive to the needs of farmers.

II. Having recognized that certain researchable constraints cut across two or more network programmes, the Committee recommends that "Inter-Network subject-matter task forces" be created, also to promote multidisciplinary, internetwork collaborative research and to minimize un-necessary duplication of efforts and resources.

III. Having considered and agreed with the criticism that the present research priorities of the networks lack both socio-economic impact orientation and disciplinary balance, and realizing the necessity to enhance the transfer and adoption of technologies through improved research-extension-farmer linkages and to influence agricultural development policy in member countries, the OC recommends the inclusion of socio-economists in the steering committee of each network. The Committee further suggested that the West African Farming Systems Research Network (WAFSRN) should assist other networks in the design and execution of socio-economic research relevant to crop-commodity networks.

IV. Recognizing that the SAFGRAD Networks Strategic Plan was developed through full participation of NARS; realizing the need to formulate, elaborate and to specify project activities, to meet short and long-term targets within specified time frame, in addition to defining required inputs and expected outputs; the Committee recommends the development of well formulated project activities based on previously identified constraints. The Committee further recommended that network coordinators and selected members of SC should immediately commence work on developing projects that would be fully discussed during the next meetings of steering committees of the respective networks, to which appropriate resource persons would be invited.

V. After lengthy discussion of the role, function and composition of the "Sponsoring Group", the OC recommends the re-vitalization of the "Group" in order to oversee accountability of project activities; to provide guidance that would enable SAFGRAD discharge its role as an African Research Promotion and Coordination Agency; and to raise funds for project activities.

VI. While commending SPAAR in making NARS central to its activities, the OC noted that SPAAR has given rise to unfulfilled expectations among NARS. Recognizing that networking enhances the "capturing of spill-over of technologies" among relatively strong and weak NARS, the Committee recommends that SPAAR should find ways and means of sustaining those eco-regional networking programmes which have been effective and which transcend political boundaries and linguistic affiliations.

VII. Concerned with the diffusion of SAFGRAD technologies and to publicize the OC recommends that the SCO produces consolidated annual reports on SAFGRAD with effect from 1991.

VIII. Recognizing the OAU policy that SAFGRAD should provide technical and administrative services for networks of its mandated crop, like millet, the OC recommends that the West and Central Africa Millet Network should be affiliated with SAFGRAD management. It further recommends that this issue be addressed during the next NARDs meeting.

IX. Noting the successful training in scientific writing for West and Central Africa region that was effected jointly SAFGRAD, WARDA and AASE, the Committee recommends similar training services to Eastern and Southern Africa region.

X. Aware of its role in SAFGRAD; realizing the need for it to give a comprehensive report to the Council of National Agricultural Research Directors; having decided that the said report should be written by the end of January 1992, the Committee recommends that the SCO facilitates the preparation of the OC report.

VOTE OF THANKS

The Oversight Committee, at its seventh meeting expressed its profound gratitude to the OAU General Secretariat at large and to the Secretary General in particular, for its administrative and management decisions to institutionalize SAFGRAD as its "Permanent Bureau for Promotion and Coordination of Agricultural Research in Sub-Saharan Africa". The Committee is very grateful to USAID and other donors (IDRC, ADB, Ford Foundation, French Government, etc) for their continued final support. The Committee further expressed its deep appreciation to the Government and People of Burkina Faso for their continued enthusiastic administrative and logistic support to SAFGRAD and for their warm hospitality.

December 13, 1991

AFRICAN UNION UNION AFRICAINE

African Union Common Repository

<http://archives.au.int>

Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA)

African Union Specialized Technical Office on Research and Development

1991-11

REPORT OF THE SEVENTH SAFGRAD OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

AU-SAFGRAD

AU-SAFGRAD

<http://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/5026>

Downloaded from African Union Common Repository