

Message from the Director General and Chairman of the Board of Trustees

THE YEAR that was 2000 had been the subject of much speculation among the ‘prophets of doom,’ not least of which was the global threat of computer problems in the ‘Y2K scenario.’ Thankfully, most of the doom-prophets were proved wrong. At WARDA it was very much ‘business as usual,’ or rather a continuation of the ‘busy-ness’ that characterized 1999. Yes, 2000 was another busy year for us, but not one without its rewards.

The Fourth External Program and Management Review (EPMR) of WARDA was completed in February. The report spoke in glowing terms of the excellence of our science and the effectiveness of our partnership approaches. It highlighted and commended management for putting in place strategic directions, new policies and procedures for efficient running of the Center. Some comments in the report were reported in our message last year.

In confirmation of the excellent evaluation by the EPMR, WARDA received the ‘Millennium’ edition of the CGIAR King Baudouin Award for the breakthrough in interspecific hybridization of rice, the development of the NERICAs and effective participatory approaches in technology dissemination. This award gives international recognition to our achievements, and support to our ongoing drive for a massive upsurge in rice productivity within our mandate region.

Impressed by WARDA’s successful transformation and uniqueness as a successful African institution, the Harvard Business School undertook a case study, *WARDA: Leading a rice revolution in West Africa*. For more details on these, and on our other activities, we would draw your attention to *The Year in Review: 2000* on page 55.

During the year, we completed a study of the impact of rice varietal improvement in West Africa. The study, sponsored by the CGIAR Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group, looked at the financial gains attributable to the use of improved rice cultivars in seven major rice-producing countries in the region: Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone. On average, genetic enhancement and transfer have increased (net) farm revenues by US\$100 per hectare; however, gains have been uneven across ecologies: from \$232/ha in irrigated lowlands, through \$163 in rainfed lowlands, \$69 in mangrove swamps, to \$32 in both deep-water/floating and upland ecologies. Overall, varietal improvement is estimated to have contributed approximately \$374 million to the \$1.85 billion rice-production economy in the seven countries in 1998. Projections to 2004 are promising: 10% adoption of upcoming upland varieties (including NERICAs) in just Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone would contribute nearly \$8 million per year, while 25% adoption—a not unlikely scenario according to our experience in Guinea—would add some \$20 million per year to the economy in these countries.

As the year drew to a close, WARDA’s Director General accepted the responsibility of chairing the CGIAR Center Director’s Committee (CDC) Sub-Committee on Sub-Saharan Africa. This responsibility immediately involved two

major activities in response to the CGIAR's decisions at International Centers Week 2000. The first of these is to lead the process toward regional planning, priority-setting and coordination-cum-integration of CGIAR activities in Sub-Saharan Africa. The second is to develop a System-wide Initiative on the impact of HIV/AIDS on agriculture.

It was with great sadness that we bade farewell to Michael Goon, Deputy Director General for Administration and Finance, in December. Michael joined the management team in early 1998, and helped us make significant progress in reducing our operating deficit and putting in place new financial management structures that will make WARDA a stronger place in the coming years. We also said goodbye to Amir Kassam, Deputy Director General for Programs, at the end of his two-year leave-of-absence from his position at FAO in July.

These changes presaged a reclassification and restructuring exercise. The two Deputy Directors General positions are being replaced by Directors. And, in response to the EPMP recommendations, the Policy Support Program (Program 3) and the Systems Development and Technology Transfer Program (Program 4) have been merged into one Rice Policy and Development Program (new Program 3).

The last year also saw the arrival of: Godwin Akpokodje (Policy Economist Visiting Scientist, Nigeria Station), Aliou Diagne (Impact Assessment Economist), Marie-Josèphe Dugué (Inland Valley Consortium Regional Coordinator, *Coopération française*), Olaf Erenstein (Production Economist), Pierrick Fraval (Water Management Economist, Sahel Station, IWMI/*Cemagref*), Assétou Kanouté (Technology Transfer Scientist, Visiting Scientist), Mohamed Kebbeh (Production Economist, Sahel Station), Augustin Munyemana (Participatory Technology Development Scientist, Nigeria Station, Hohenheim University), Hla Myint (Information and Data Analyst, United Nations Volunteer), Myra Wopereis-Pura (Technology Transfer Officer, United Nations Volunteer), and N'guéssan Yoboué (Germplasm Scientist, Visiting Scientist).

The days when we thought only of the 'quick-fix,' single solution to a single problem in agriculture are long gone. The theme of this year's report is 'integrated management,' be it at the crop level or targeted at a particular pest.

One of the benefits of having out-stations is the continuity that they lend to long-term research and development. Our Sahel Station in northern Senegal has been active in Sahelian irrigated rice research for over 10 years, and there is now a substantial body of knowledge and technologies available for our partners and ultimate clients (farmers). The time has come to put all the components together and start wide-scale dissemination of advice and technologies that can have a significant impact on irrigated rice farming in the Sahel. Our first feature story looks at just this issue—how we have developed the components, and how we intend to promote integrated crop management in this high-potential ecology (page 9).

Over the last few years, our Annual Reports have sadly neglected the realm of pests—particularly insects and diseases. This year, we bring you up to date with our work on integrated pest management for key constraints in the region. African rice gall midge is the principal insect pest of rainfed lowland rice in concentrated 'pockets' in four of our member countries, causing losses of between 45 and 90% (page 20). Rice yellow mottle virus is a major problem in irrigated and

WARDA
Director
General
Kanayo F.
Nwanze
(left) with
new Board
Chairman
Lindsay Innes,
appointed
in 2000



lowland rice throughout the region, again causing significant crop losses. We look at the massive screening effort aimed at developing plant resistance to the disease, and other components of integrated management (page 27).

Another major pest group is weeds. Here our integrated approach involves computer modeling, which helps to guide our work on varietal improvement. The focus of the story is weed-competitiveness and the model is used to determine how some theoretical plant types would behave in direct-seeded systems in the Sahel. This in turn should give our breeders target traits for improving weed-competitiveness in irrigated rice varieties (page 39).

This year's *Donor Country Profile* looks at Canada. A diverse array of research topics has been funded over the years by the Canadian Government through the two-pronged route of direct grant and monies channeled through the International Development Research Center (IDRC), and we are particularly grateful for their continued commitment to our core program through unrestricted funding (page 45).

We cannot finish with 2000 without mention of the security situation in our host country. As many of you will know, Côte d'Ivoire went through a difficult transition between the military coup d'état in December 1999 and the establishment of a democratically elected president in October 2000. Various socio-political disturbance through the year could not pass without some impact on WARDA's operations—none moreso than the invasion of our property by rebel military personnel during a mutiny in July. Overall, however, the impact of such disturbances was not great and mainly indirect, leading to restrictions on in-country travel and cessation of headquarters operations for several days. The pace of WARDA's vital work may have been slowed during parts of the year, but it will not stop—too many people, present and future generations, are depending on an agricultural revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa for our work to come to a complete halt!

Last, but not least, a word of thanks to all of our partners—from donors to farmers, from the advanced research institutions to the national agricultural research and extension services, from the CGIAR community to the NGO community, and many, many more: without you, WARDA would not be what it is today. Without you, WARDA will not reach its potential in the spheres of rice research and development, and information and technology dissemination for the West and Central Africa region. Without *you*, the rice farmers of the region would face a bleaker future. So from us and from them: "Thank you."

Kanayo F. Nwanze
Director General

N. Lindsay Innes
Chairman, Board of Trustees