

The Period in
Review
May 2003 to
April 2004

Despite the Ivorian crisis, the period covered by this Annual Report witnessed a surge in activities and events in which the Africa Rice Center staff took active part.

The main reasons for this were the growing popularity of NERICA and other technologies developed by the Center, the launching of the International Year of Rice, the announcement of Dr Monty Jones as the co-winner of the 2004 World Food Prize for the NERICA breakthrough, and the tenure of the Director General Dr Kanayo F. Nwanze as the Chair of the CGIAR Center Directors Committee (CDC) for 2004.

Only the highlights are included in this section.

2003

FARA (18-20 May) and GFAR, 22-24 May: The FARA Executive Committee Meeting and Second Plenary Meeting and the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) Triennial Meeting, held in Dakar, Senegal, showed strong support for the Center's products from partners and donor representatives. At the FARA Plenary, Dr Nwanze gave a presentation on *Scaling up the NERICA dissemination in sub-Saharan Africa*.

Senegal President's Award for Science, 30 June: The Center received the *Grand prix du Président de la République pour les sciences*—Senegal's highest award for science and technology—for the adaptation and dissemination of ASI, the most widely used rice thresher in Senegal. The award was presented personally by President Abdoulaye Wade to the WARDA team (led by Dr Kouamé Miezan) based in Senegal and its partners.



High-level Meeting on NERICA Dissemination, 1 July:

The purpose of this meeting, which was combined with the second McNamara Seminar held by CGIAR and the World Bank in Tokyo, Japan, was to identify the most efficient way for increasing NERICA's dissemination in SSA. WARDA emphasized the role of the African Rice Initiative (ARI), which was launched in 2002 to serve as a focused channel for coordinated NERICA dissemination across SSA. The meeting was attended by several partners including representatives from the World Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), Japanese ministries, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), CGIAR, and the Africa Rice Center. A second meeting to follow up on the discussion was proposed for September 2003.

Honorary Title from Ivorian Government, 18 July:

Dr Kouamé Miezan, Leader of the Irrigated Rice Program, was honored by the Côte d'Ivoire government for his long service to rice research and development through his work at the Africa Rice Center since 1983. He was conferred with the title of *Commandeur dans l'ordre du mérite Ivoirien* (Commander in the Ivorian Merit Order).



Seeds for Life Project, 8 August: To revive agriculture and mitigate the food shortage in western Côte d'Ivoire, which was severely affected by the Ivorian crisis, the Center launched a *Seeds for Life* project to donate seeds of improved rice varieties to FAO, World Food Programme (WFP), and a local NGO (ACOPCI) for distribution to farmers. The Center will monitor the use and impact of the

distributed seed on the farming communities. The *Seeds for Life* ceremony was organized under the aegis of the Ministry of Scientific Research, Côte d'Ivoire.

Rice Policy Workshop, 21-22 August: A concluding workshop of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded rice sector project *The Nigerian Rice Economy in a Competitive World: Constraints, Opportunities, and Strategic Choices*, was organized in Ibadan, Nigeria. The project was implemented by the Africa Rice Center in collaboration with the Nigeria Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER).

The participants recommended a comprehensive approach to enhance the competitiveness of the rice sector by improving the efficiency of operators at the production, processing, and marketing levels. The recommended strategy was later presented to the Nigerian Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources. It is also expected to feed into the *Presidential Committee on Increased Rice Production and Export in Nigeria* established by President Obasanjo in 2002.

Second High-level Meeting on NERICA Dissemination, 12 September: Building on the conclusions of the first meeting in July 2003 in Tokyo, the second meeting jointly organized by CGIAR and the World Bank, Tokyo, focused on the outcome of the JICA study mission carried out in June-July 2003 on NERICA dissemination in SSA and the ARI Management Committee Meeting held in early September.



24th Session of the WARDA Council of Ministers, 18-19 September: The Session, held in Cotonou, Benin, was chaired by Lazare Schoueto, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Fishery, Government of Benin. The Council of Ministers put on record its deep appreciation for the “courage and high sense of responsibility” of the WARDA Board, the Director General and staff during the Ivoirian crisis. Several important Resolutions were passed, including the approval of the designation *Africa Rice Center (WARDA)* and the call for recognizing WARDA as a specialized institution of the African Union within the NEPAD framework. The Council also resolved to maintain the headquarters in Côte d'Ivoire.

The National Experts Committee (NEC) comprising the Directors of the national programs of WARDA member countries met on the first day of the Session and prepared the groundwork for the Council. The Session was preceded by a *Rice Day*, organized jointly by the Institut national des recherches agricoles du Bénin (INRAB) and the Center, that included seminars and display booths by various organizations involved in rice R&D, production and processing.

African Development Bank (AfDB) Support for NERICA Dissemination, 26 September: AfDB announced a grant and loan of more than \$30 million to support NERICA dissemination in seven West African countries for 5 years. The AfDB support, formalized through an agreement with the selected countries, was the culmination of a long preparatory work by the African Rice Initiative and WARDA, which hosts the Initiative.

About 80% of the targeted beneficiaries of the AfDB-funded project will be the rural poor, mostly women. The project estimates that about 33,000 farm families will be involved in participatory varietal selection (PVS) strategy to accelerate the NERICA dissemination. About 400 000 ha of additional land is expected to be under NERICA cultivation by the 5th year of the project. The import bill of the seven countries is expected to reduce by about US\$100 million.

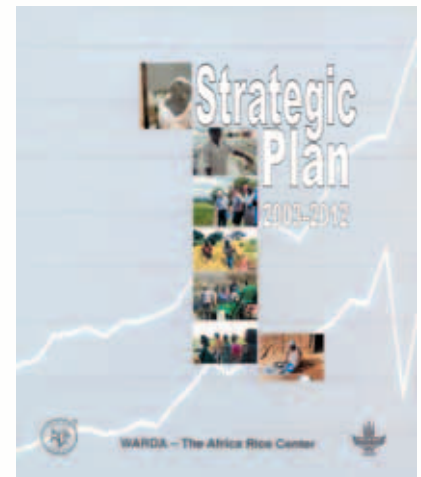
Board Executive and Finance Committee (EFC) Meeting, 22-24 September: The Ministry of Scientific Research, Government of Côte d'Ivoire hosted the EFC in Abidjan. Among the important decisions taken was the Board's approval of the Center's new Strategic Plan (2003–2012). The EFC met with the Prime Minister, Government of Côte d'Ivoire.

New Strategic Plan (2003–2012) Comes into Force, 24 September: In line with its new pan-African vision, in 2003 the Center launched a new Strategic Plan that charts its course for the next 10 years. It helps position the Center to address the emerging challenges in SSA in association with its partners. The Strategy will guide present and future efforts of the Center, within the Plan period, in providing technologies for improving the livelihoods of poor African rice farmers and consumers.

The Strategy for 2003–2012 refocuses and streamlines the Center's research programs into two major areas: (1) development of components for integrated rice production systems, and (2) rice policy and development. These two programs will function through a set of well-focused projects with specific outputs and milestones within the 3-year rolling Medium-Term Plans (MTP).

Tokyo International Conference on Africa's Development (TICAD) III, 29 September–1 October: The TICAD process initiated in 1993 has become a major global framework for Asia and Africa to collaborate in promoting Africa's development. Commemorating its 10th anniversary in Tokyo, Japan, TICAD III was one of the biggest ever conferences held on Africa with delegates from 90 countries, including 23 African Heads of State. Receiving high tributes from world leaders at TICAD III, NERICA emerged as a byword for successful Asia-Africa cooperation.

Invited to participate at TICAD III, WARDA organized a CGIAR/WARDA side event on NERICA including a display booth and a participatory Seminar, chaired by Mr Yukio Yoshimura, World Bank Vice President and Special Representative, Japan. Dr Nwanze delivered a lead-off statement on *The Challenge of Agricultural Development in Africa and the Promise of NERICA* in one of the thematically focused sessions at TICAD III.





MoU between the Center and ENI, Congo-Brazzaville, 10 October:

The Center signed an agreement with ENI-Congo, a private petroleum company, which is carrying out a pilot project on rice production in Congo-Brazzaville. As part of this agreement, the Center will provide technical backstopping (supply of seeds, training, data analysis, monitoring and evaluation) to the project with financial support from ENI.

Honor from the Ivoirian Government, 16 October:

On the occasion of the 23rd World Food Day, WARDA received the Diplôme d'Honneur from the Ivoirian Government for its effective contribution to the fight against hunger in Côte d'Ivoire.



MoU between the Center and NARO, Uganda, 21 October:

NERICA's increasing popularity has been the driving force for the Center's expansion into Eastern and Central Africa. During Dr Nwanze's trip to Uganda, which is witnessing an amazing NERICA boom, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Center and the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO). The MoU will facilitate joint activities on rice R&D, exchange of germplasm and information, and capacity building.

Annual General Meeting (AGM), 27–31 October:

CGIAR's 2003 AGM, held in Nairobi, Kenya, introduced a new format for Centers and Members Day that included Center displays, bilateral meetings with members and holding of parallel sessions by the Centers. WARDA convened a panel discussion on the *African Rice Initiative: from Research to Development*. The panel members representing a wide array of stakeholders endorsed a coordinated NERICA dissemination effort across Africa. As the Incoming CDC Chair, Dr Nwanze made a presentation on *Looking Back into the Future: Perspectives from the Incoming CDC Chair*.



FAO-IVC Workshop, 4–7 November:

FAO and IVC jointly organized a workshop on Integrated Irrigation-Aquaculture (IIA) for West Africa, in Bamako, Mali, under the aegis of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery, Government of Mali. Thirty representatives from 10 West African countries participated in the workshop, which had Resource Persons from national and international organizations. The workshop was timely because IVC will be involved in the implementation of the *Water and Food Challenge Program* for rice-fish farming activities in West and Central Africa.

Research Days, 8–12 December:

The Center's Research Days were organized in Bamako, Mali to review the research activities of 2003 and plan for 2004. Apart from Management and staff, two Board members, representatives from International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and IER attended. Achievements, drawbacks and future challenges were highlighted.

2004

International Year of Rice Celebrations, 12–13 February:

Researchers from the Center, together with other leading rice experts from around the world, participated in the Rice Conference convened by FAO in Rome, Italy, to present their perspectives on rice R&D activities and challenges for the future. WARDA and its partners in the national programs developed plans for celebrating the IYR in sub-Saharan Africa.



IVC Annual Meeting, 17–19 February: Since the 2003 Annual Meeting could not be held because of the Ivoirian crisis, the 2004 Annual Meeting was crucial for all the IVC stakeholders to review the Phase II activities of the Regional and National Coordination Units (RCU and NCU) conducted in 2002 and 2003. Major points reviewed by the Consortium Management Committee (CMC) at its meeting in May 2003 were presented.

The CMC decisions included the acceptance of The Gambia as a new IVC member and the nomination of the NCU of Benin as the new Chair. Strategic issues, such as the future of IVC, the possibility of launching a Phase III, scaling up of results and the need for seeking new funding mechanisms were discussed at the Annual Meeting in preparation for the external review of the IVC Phase II, scheduled for mid-2004. The WAIVIS database incorporating information on inland valley characterization collected in the 10 member countries was distributed to participants as well as posted on the IVC website.

Ugandan Parliamentary Session with CGIAR, 18–20 February: CGIAR hosted a briefing for Ugandan Members of Parliament in Jinja, Uganda. Prof. Richard Musangi, WARDA Board Chair addressed the Parliamentarians on behalf of CGIAR. Researchers from several CGIAR Centers, including WARDA, made presentations. Parliamentarians called for strengthening CGIAR's collaborative links with Uganda.

World Bank Annual Rural Week, 29 February–6 March: Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (ESSD) Week is hosted annually by the World Bank's ESSD Vice Presidency. Impacts of research by CGIAR Centers and contributions to the larger sustainable development agenda were showcased during the event. As CDC Chair, Dr Nwanze presented a paper on *Natural Resources Management and the Role of the CGIAR*. He also made a presentation on *Linking World Bank Operations to CGIAR: A Case Study of NERICAs in Guinea*.

MoU between CGIAR and NEPAD, 8 March: A significant milestone for the CGIAR was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between NEPAD and the CGIAR-supported Centers represented by Dr Nwanze, in Gauteng, South Africa. This omnibus document provides political and legal recognition for all CGIAR Centers with which NEPAD can work towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in SSA.



International Women's Day Celebration, 8 March: ARI participated in the event, displaying posters and NERICA-based products of special interest to women's associations. WARDA Director of Research, Dr Shellemiah Keya presented a bag of NERICA to the First Lady of Mali, Mrs Touré Lobbo Traoré.

AVRDC-Africa Rice Center Workshop, 9–11 March: A workshop on *Planning Research Activities for the Improvement of Vegetable Production in West Africa* was organized in Bamako, Mali to plan the activities of the joint AVRDC-Africa Rice Center project. Participants identified priorities for research and development of the rice-based vegetable sector in the sub-region.

2004 World Food Prize Announcement, 29 March: Dr Monty Jones, former senior rice breeder at WARDA, presently the Executive Secretary of FARA, was selected as the co-winner of the 2004 World Food Prize for the NERICA breakthrough. He shares the Prize with Professor Yuan Longping from China. The announcement of the co-winners of the 2004 World Food Prize took place during a U.S. State Department ceremony in Washington DC with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell; Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman; FAO Director General Jacques Diouf; Nobel Laureate and creator of the World Food Prize Dr Norman E. Borlaug; Chairman of the World Food Prize Foundation John Ruan III; and President of the World Food Prize and former U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Quinn.



MoU with ASARECA, 3 April: A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between WARDA and the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) to support the reactivation and functioning of the ASARECA Rice Research Network (ECARRN). WARDA will provide technical backstopping for all of ASARECA's rice research and development activities and support the network coordination office that will be headed by a WARDA staff recruited from the region. It will also provide start-up funds for the network activities.

Twenty-Fourth Meeting of the Board of Trustees, 19–24 April: To effectively translate the Center's new Strategic Plan (2003-2012), the Board approved a new programmatic structure that will enhance the relevance and impact of the Center's research products and services in SSA. The Center's core research areas will focus on the two major challenges highlighted in the Strategic Plan: *Integrated Rice Production Systems* and *Rice Policy and Development*. The two programs will be headed each by an Assistant Director under the overall direction of the Assistant Director General, Research and Development.



As a follow-up of the Resolution taken by the Council of Ministers in its 24th Session in September 2003 urging the Côte d'Ivoire Government to provide security to the Center to return to its headquarters in Bouaké/M'bé, the Board endorsed the Center's *Progressive Return Plan*.