

The Year in Review: 2001

IN 2001, WARDA built on its past successes and ‘moved along’ new developments that were initiated in 2000. In particular, the NERICA varieties became the focus of a whole new shift in the Association’s drive to help ensure food security for its mandate region and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. But, we move on too fast. As ever, we aim to provide a chronological view of WARDA’s plethora of activities through the year with the aim of adding some balance for those areas not covered by Features in this issue of our *Annual Report*.

The 2001 **Annual In-house Review and Planning Meeting** took place at Headquarters from 20 to 23 February. This annual event gives WARDA scientists the opportunity to present the highlights from the previous year’s research with the whole staff, while affording the opportunity for discussion of crucial issues and fine-tuning of research planning for the coming year.

On 14–16 March, WARDA hosted a Workshop on **A Collaborative Platform for Agricultural Research in Sub-Saharan Africa**, which was co-organized with the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR), and sponsored by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA, The Netherlands). The meeting brought 13 university officials from 10 Sub-Saharan countries, together with WARDA and ISNAR staff, and research managers from the Ivorian Ministry of Higher Education, and the *Centre ivoirien de recherches économiques et sociales* (CIRES). The participants established a platform for collaboration among international agricultural research centers, universities, and national agricultural research organizations to maximize the advantages of each partner and improve efficiency in agricultural research and

education. (The proceedings were published in English jointly with ISNAR.)

The **Annual Workshop of the Inland Valley Consortium (IVC)** took place on 19–23 March at WARDA Headquarters. Nine of the 10 member countries were represented, along with 5 of the 8 member international institutions. Participants reported on and discussed results from IVC-funded research in 2000; visited the Sustainable Productivity Improvement for Rice in Inland Valleys of West Africa (SPIRIVWA) project site at Gagnoa (Côte d’Ivoire), and discussed the implementation of the IVC Phase II. Working groups discussed the outcome of a preparatory workshop held in January 2001, and identified research priorities under four themes. An action plan was also developed at the workshop for the following six-months activities.

The **WARDA Board of Trustees** held its annual meeting at Headquarters on 26–30 March.

On 27 March, there was a **Meeting on the protection of new varieties of plants in Côte d’Ivoire** held at the Ministry of Industry, Abidjan. The Ivorian Government called the meeting to examine opportunities for the country to set up a national committee to grant plant

breeders' right on new and innovative findings concerning planting materials. The meeting was chaired by the Ministry of Industry and participating organizations included the *Agence nationale d'appui au développement rural* (ANADER, Côte d'Ivoire), the *Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement* (CIRAD), University Abobo Adjamé, the Ivorian Ministry of Agriculture (Seed Board, Plant Protection Division and Quality Control Division), the private seed companies Syngenta, and Aventis, and WARDA.

As part of the World Food Programme project to promote community-based seed systems (CBSS), WARDA co-organized a **Training Course for Innovative Farmers and Trainers** in CBSS with ANADER and the World Food Programme (WFP) at ANADER's offices in Bouaké from 27 to 31 March.

On 2–4 April, WARDA and the West Africa Rural Foundation (WARF) organized a workshop in Dakar, Senegal, to review, revise and validate a project proposal on **participatory adaptation and evaluation of integrated crop management (ICM) options for irrigated rice** in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal. The 34 participants represented national research and extension partners from the target countries; the West and Central African Council for Research and Development (WECARD/CORAF); Coordinators of the FAO Special Program for Food Security from four of the countries; NGO representatives from two countries; Producer organizations from three countries; Winrock International, Senegal; FAO Rome (plus one FAO consultant from Australia) and FAO Africa Office, Accra; WARDA and WARF. The proposal was duly validated and passed for further processing by WARDA. WARDA's ICM work in the irrigated ecology was the subject of a Feature in last year's report.

Following the ICM workshop, WARDA Sahel Station hosted a workshop on **Weed Management in Lowland Irrigated Rice: Towards Integrated Weed**

Management in Lowland Rice, on 5 April. Twenty-three participants represented the NARES and NGOs of The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal, as well as WARDA, FAO and the UK Natural Resources Institute. Results of research, conducted within the framework of the DFID project on Integrated Weed Management in Lowland Rice, were presented and discussed. The participants also identified research priorities and prospects for future collaboration among themselves and with WARF. A common priority area for research and extension was the use of integrated weed management components, while activities on wild rice were more country dependant. The need for documentation on weed management was stressed strongly, while knowledge gaps were identified in weed management for different levels of crop management, namely interactions with nitrogen, plant type, water management and soil type.

On 9–12 April, WARDA hosted an international workshop on **NERICA-based Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa**, at its headquarters. The workshop was attended by over 90 participants from African and Asian research institutions, including several Ministers and Vice-Ministers from West and Central African states, the President of the Rockefeller Foundation, senior officials from the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the United Nations system and WARDA. Participants unanimously agreed to form a Consortium to coordinate wide dissemination of NERICAs to millions of poor farmers, many of them women, in Sub-Saharan Africa. Following visits to farmers' fields in Central Côte d'Ivoire on Sunday, 8 April, Dr Gordon Conway, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, said: "NERICA rice varieties represent genuine new potential for resource-poor farmers throughout Sub-Saharan Africa and should be disseminated widely throughout the continent."

On 19 April, a full-day **workshop** was held at WARDA Headquarters to review the results of a **Gender and Diversity Survey**, that had been conducted in June 2000. Permanent staff of all levels (management, internationally recruited, and general service) participated

in the open and animated discussions. The survey had reviewed the level of implementation of policies and procedures recommended in previous gender and diversity assessments in 1996 and 1998. The survey was supported by the Organizational Change Program (OCP) and Gender and Diversity Program, both parts of the CGIAR; the feedback workshop was facilitated by consultant Charity Kabutha. After the facilitator presented the survey results, there was some open discussion of the results, and on how the report might be improved. Recommendations and strategies for the way forward were then discussed by general-service and internationally-recruited staff separately. At the end, the facilitator presented a synthesized way forward to the whole group.

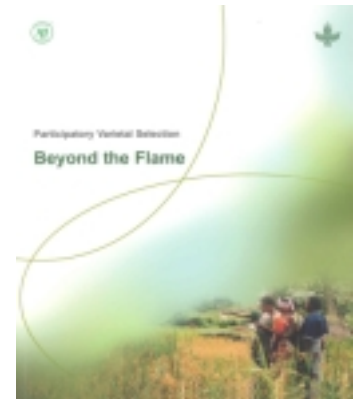
The **Rice Research and Development Network for West and Central Africa (ROCARIZ) Steering Committee** held its annual meeting at WARDA Headquarters on 24–26 April. The Steering Committee consists of 10 members drawn from the network membership with broad representation of the seven Task Forces; the ROCARIZ Coordinator, who is based at WARDA, serves as secretary to the Committee. The Committee reviewed the Coordinator’s annual report and approved the proposed work plan and budget. The members also discussed the upcoming monitoring tour (*see below*) and Second Regional Rice Research Review (4Rs) to be held in 2002.

The **Participatory Rice Improvement and Gender/User Analysis (PRIGA/PVS) Network Annual Workshop** was held at WARDA Headquarters on 2–5 May. The 74 participants represented 16 of WARDA’s 17 member countries, NGOs, the Department for International Development (DFID), the System-wide Programme on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis for Technology Development and Institutional Innovation (PRGA) and WARDA. The proceedings were published in early 2002. During the workshop, the PVS teams from each country were interviewed on the issues of impact of the PRIGA research and institutional changes

that the work has brought about within the national programs; the results of which will be published by PRGA–CIAT (*Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical*) and WARDA in 2002. The proceedings of the workshop have been published as *Participatory Varietal Selection: Beyond the Flame* (WARDA, 2002).

On 7–10 May 2001, the PRGA and WARDA organized a **Workshop on Participatory Plant Breeding in Africa: An Exchange of Experiences**, at WARDA Headquarters. The workshop brought together over 60 scientists (plant breeders, geneticists, agronomists, seed technologists, socio-economists), development specialists, community organizers and farmers drawn from 22 countries (16 African countries were represented). Participants exchanged and compared their experiences in participatory plant breeding and ‘dynamic biodiversity enhancement’ in Sub-Saharan Africa; contributed to a working document of guidelines for participatory plant breeding; identified follow-up actions to support farmer-led and research-led participatory plant breeding; and, identified follow-up actions to support dynamic biodiversity conservation and enhancement. In addition, the workshop succeeded in encouraging dialog between research and development professionals, on one side, and farmers, on the other side. It also raised the awareness of plant breeders on participatory approaches to crop improvement. The plan to develop joint work-plans was unfortunately hindered by the lack of committed funding at the time of the workshop.

From 14 to 20 May, the INGER-Africa Coordinator and Impact-Assessment Economist visited Guinea to



launch the **DFID-funded project on the impact of modern rice varieties on biodiversity**. In addition, discussions were held with the national research (*Institut de recherche agronomique de Guinée*, IRAG) and extension (*Service national de la promotion rurale et de la vulgarisation agricole*, SNPRV) institutions on the prospects of establishing an Impact Assessment Network in Guinea.

On 15–16 May, the steering committee of the **Participatory Adaptation and Diffusion of technologies for rice-based Systems (PADS)** project met at WARDA Headquarters. Eight members from research, extension and NGOs in the project countries—Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana and Guinea—participated to present results of rapid rural appraisals (to identify constraints), to present their work plans and budgets, and to identify activities that cut across international borders.

Former WARDA Visiting Scientist Assétou Kanouté returned to WARDA Headquarters in June to conduct a training course on **Improved cultural techniques for inland-valley and rainfed rice**. The course, from 7 to 8 June, brought 20 participants from NGOs that Kanouté had established linkages with during her term at WARDA.

The West Africa Seed Development Unit (WASDU), based in Accra, Ghana, organized a **National training workshop on the production, marketing and quality control of seed** in collaboration with the Ivorian Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRA), the *Fonds de développement de la formation professionnelle* (FDFP) and WARDA, at WARDA Headquarters, from 11 to 22 June. The workshop objectives were to improve participants’ technical capacity; promote exchange among national seed sectors; improve the availability of quality seed; develop conditions favorable for private investment in the seed sector; and, develop conditions favorable for interaction between private and public sectors. Forty-one participants from Ivorian extension agencies, agricultural

projects and NGOs attended the workshop, along with 21 resource persons.

On 25 and 26 June, the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI, UK) and WARDA hosted a **Stakeholder Workshop on Functional Biodiversity in Rice** at WARDA Headquarters. The workshop brought together researchers from four countries, together with others from WARDA and CABI, to review the effects of intensifying rice cultivation on the incidence of rice diseases and pests, and appropriate management practices. The workshop provided an opportunity for the researchers to discuss their proposals for research in this area, and created linkages that will be maintained as the work proceeds.

In July, WARDA, ANADER and *Projet national riz* (PNR) embarked on a nine-month program of intervention methodology development in **Participatory Learning and Action Research in Integrated Rice Management (PLAR-IRM)** in inland valleys. A group of 30 farmers participated in weekly sessions at each location—Bamoro and Lokakpli, Côte d’Ivoire. The



Dr Robert Guei, INGER-Africa Coordinator being interviewed by the media during the WASDU training course

activities involved one 3–4 hour session at each site per week. The farmers were completely free to implement any aspect of what they learnt, adding their chosen elements to their own practices on designated IRM fields (part of their own farm). The basic principles of PLAR-IRM are making good field observations, analyzing the observations, and taking appropriate decisions. The participating farmers were encouraged to follow their new practices through stringent self-evaluation by means of an illustrated form; this aspect is expected to help the decision-making process, whereby farmers see how well they can implement their chosen practices and monitor the effects of ‘good’ or ‘poor’ implementation. The intervention team (WARDA, ANADER and PNR) used the experience to develop a curriculum for farmer learning through PLAR-IRM, complete with facilitator’s guide and technical manual. The first draft of the curriculum is now ready, and comprises 27 learning modules and 27 technical references. The methodology is being fine-tuned at several new sites in Côte d’Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Togo from 2002.

A team from **Association for International Cooperation of Agriculture and Forestry (AICAF, Japan)** visited WARDA Headquarters on 1 August as part of their survey-tour for the project ‘Supporting Development of Small-scale Farming Groups’ in Côte



Participatory Learning and Action Research, Bamoro, Côte d’Ivoire

d’Ivoire. The project focuses on rice and aims to promote and establish small-scale paddy-field rice farming in Sub-Saharan Africa. The courtesy visit to WARDA enabled a brief exchange of views on the subject between AICAF and WARDA staff.

On 21–22 August, WARDA joined forces with *Institut sénégalais de recherches agricoles (ISRA)* and *Société d’aménagement et d’exploitation des terres du delta du fleuve Sénégal et des vallées du fleuve Sénégal et de la Falémé (SAED)* in a *Journée riz (Rice Day)* in Dakar,



Senegal, to coincide with the Council of Ministers meeting on the following two days. Results of all three institutions were presented and a rice field was ‘planted’ in the center of Dakar. Intensive press coverage accompanied the event.

The **National Experts Committee** met in Dakar, Senegal, on 23 August in preparation for the 23rd Ordinary Session of the **WARDA Council of Ministers** the following day. Among other items, the Council was presented with the draft *Strategic Plan for 2001–2010*. The Council endorsed the use of the upcoming WECARD/CORAF–CGIAR program integration meeting to further incorporate national rice research priorities into the WARDA Strategy. The Council also encouraged member States to make regular and timely payment of their contributions to the Association. The full text of the Council’s resolution on “Continued support in research and related activities” is given in the ‘Message from the Director General and Chairman of the Board of Trustees’ (page 1).

From 27 to 31 August, WARDA participated in **PRIGA/PVS stakeholder meetings** in Senegal and The Gambia. In Dakar, Senegal, scientists from WARDA Headquarters and WARDA Sahel Station met with PVS stakeholders from ISRA, *Fédération des femmes productrices de la région de Saint-Louis du Sénégal* (FEPRODES), *Direction régionale du développement rural* (DRDR), Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) and a representative from the donor, the Rockefeller Foundation to review PVS, CBSS and other ongoing rice research activities. In Banjul, The Gambia, the WARDA Headquarters team met with researchers from the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), together with representative from the Women’s Bureau, an NGO, the Chinese Technical Mission and UWTAET (East Timor). PVS and seed-priming trials were discussed—seed priming has been readily adopted by farmers in the project area. The meetings also identified new areas for potential research,

especially within the upcoming African Rice Initiative and with the Chinese Technical Mission.

In the process of increasing collaboration, and consequently research and development efficiency, among CGIAR centers and their partners, a **Workshop on Integration of Agricultural Research in West and Central Africa** was held at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan, 10–12 September. The meeting was jointly organized by WECARD/CORAF and the three principal CGIAR centers operating in West and Central Africa—IITA, WARDA and International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)—and brought together representatives from 9 CORAF Networks and NARS partners, 10 CG centers, 2 Sub-regional Organizations (SROs) and the European Consortium for Agricultural Research in the Tropics (ECART). The workshop identified priority areas for sub-regional research cooperation and made recommendations on mechanisms for integration of activities among partners.

Over the period 3 September to 20 October, a combined **monitoring tour** was organized by **ROCARIZ, INGER-Africa**, and the **PRIGA** network. The tour visited the upland rice ecology in Benin, Ghana and Togo, and the Sahel irrigated rice ecology in Mauritania and Senegal. They met with NARS scientists, development agents and farmers to assess on-going collaborative activities. The team included a representative of USAID—a major donor to ROCARIZ.

Scene from the ROCARIZ/ INGER-Africa/ PRIGA monitoring tour to the Sahel irrigated rice ecology, Mauritania, October 2001



On 21–22 September, WARDA celebrated its **30th Anniversary** at its Headquarters. During the opening ceremony, honors were presented to five WARDA staff in the presence of His Excellency Mr Pascal Affi N’Guéssan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, on behalf of His Excellency Mr Laurent Gbagbo, President of the Republic. A further award was presented to Ivorian rice farmer Delphine Koudou, Aka ‘Bintu’ of WARDA video fame. She was awarded “*Chevalier dans l’ordre du mérite ivoirien*” (“Knight in the Ivorian Order of Merit”) as a representative of all those farmers who have been involved in the PVS program. (For more details, see the ‘Message from the Director General and Chairman of the Board of Trustees,’ page 1.)

Concerned by the low implementation level of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) projects in Côte d’Ivoire (under 38%), the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation organized a **UNDP Information and Training Workshop** with all partners involved in UNDP projects in the country, to discuss major constraints met in fund-raising and implementation of activities, from



WARDA staff decorated by the Ivorian Government, with HE the Minister of National Education, Côte d'Ivoire: (from left to right) Dr Kouamé Miézan; Dr Monty P. Jones; Dr Kanayo F. Nwanze; HE Amani N'Guéssan Michel, Minister for National Education, Côte d'Ivoire; Dr Sitapha Diatta; Mme 'Bintu' Delphine Koudou; Mr Mark Etsiba; HE Théophile Nata, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Benin (Chairman, WARDA Council of Ministers)



HE Pascal Affi N'Guéssan, Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire (second from left), tours the exposition at WARDA's 30th Anniversary

25 to 27 September. WARDA participants used the workshop to gain a better understanding of UNDP procedures and also to prepare CBSS activities. The UNDP representatives noted that since the official approval of the CBSS project in May 2001, no funds had been released. WARDA was duly mandated to assist in: (1) planning CBSS activities for the following months; (2) fill funds request forms in relation to activities to be conducted (Start-up workshops, On-farm field workshops, and Awareness and Monitoring workshops, Training of resource persons for selected regions of Bouaké, Daloa, Man, Korhogo); (3) prepare the start-up workshop; (4) prepare official contracts for different categories of stakeholders involved in the CBSS project (ANADER, CNRA [*Centre national de recherche agronomique*], WARDA, PNR, LANADA [*Laboratoire national d'appui au développement agricole*], NGOs, and the private sector). In addition, WARDA would (a)

facilitate the immediate implementation of the CBSS program in Côte d'Ivoire; (b) produce training materials; (c) set-up a Monitoring and Evaluation framework based on partners involvement, especially ANADER; (d) conduct research and development activities to increase the value of seed produced by farmers; (e) produce Breeder Seed of NERICAs and other WARDA varieties; and (f) assist the National Research Programme to set-up a Foundation-Seed production strategy.

On 13 October, our Ivorian extension partners, ANADER, organized an **open day with farmers** in the village of Kouepheu to demonstrate the work on PVS-extension, in particular the new upland-rice varieties introduced to the Danané region. The work being 'reported' had involved some 436 farmers from 50 villages, together with 25 extension agents, two supervisors, one specialist technician and the *Chef de Zone*. ANADER agents and PVS-extension participant farmers discussed and demonstrated the methodology and results to about 150 previously unexposed farmers. A visit was made to one farmer's field, and the favored varieties were cooked for a palatability test. Group discussions were lively, and the 'new' farmers were keen to join the project.

Training on Rice Participatory Research was held at WARDA Headquarters on 15–20 October. Seven scientists and extension agents from The Gambia (4) and Rwanda (3) participated. The course covered all aspects of rice production from breeding, through diseases and pests, integrated crop management, harvesting, post-harvest processing and marketing. Various participatory methods were also presented.

An **Open Day** was held at the Sahel Station on 24 October. About 50 visitors, representing collaborating institutions, private enterprise, local farmers and farmers' organizations saw the activities of the station.

The **IVC National Coordination Unit of Côte d'Ivoire** met in Gagnoa on 25 October. Representatives from CNRA, the Universities of Cocody (Abidjan) and Bouaké, ANADER and *Bureau national d'études*

techniques et de développement (BNETD) met to discuss 11 pre-proposals for possible submission to the Consortium Management Committee for funding in 2002, and visited the inland valley of Guessihio and the SPIRIVWA project site. The latter site suffered serious delays in the establishment of the appropriate infrastructure, and there was little activity and no trials had started at the time of the visit (wet season).

A **training course on rice yellow mottle virus (RYMV)** was held at WARDA Headquarters from 29 October to 9 November, for 17 participants from 8 national programs, and WARDA Sahel Station. Participants learnt to identify the disease and its insect vectors; how to evaluate the severity of the disease in an attacked field, and methods of controlling the disease and screening varieties for resistance.

A **rice stakeholders workshop** was held under the auspices of the Nigeria Rice Sector Study by Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) and WARDA in Ibadan, Nigeria on 8–9 November. The workshop participants—drawn from the full range of rice stakeholders in the country—discussed constraints to rice-sector development in Nigeria and identified research needs. The state-of-the-art review of Nigeria's rice economy, based mainly on a literature review by Visiting



Open Day at WARDA's Sahel Station, October 2001

Scientist, Godwin Akpokodje, was presented at the workshop.

Impact of our research methods beyond our traditional mandate region of West and Central Africa was demonstrated in the request to conduct a **training course on participatory rice research and seed production**, in Kigali, Rwanda, on 27–30 November. The three-person team from WARDA presented material for 31 Rwandan NAR(E)S personnel.

From 19 to 22 December, WARDA participated in a workshop in Bouaké, Côte d’Ivoire, along with MINAGRA, UNDP and WFP to **train CBSS facilitators**. Some 35 farmers, 10 field extension agents and 5 senior/specialist technicians—representing ANADER, a Korhogo-based cotton company LCCI, *Organisation des volontaires pour le développement local* (OVDL) and PNR—took part, in addition to co-sponsor representatives.