



AfricaRice

**Report of the 32nd Ordinary Session of the
Council of Ministers of the Africa Rice Center
(AfricaRice)**

Cairo, Egypt

31st March 2022

1. Preamble

The Council of Ministers (COM) of AfricaRice held its 32nd ordinary session (hereafter the 32nd COM), virtually, on the 31st of March 2022. Assistance to the organization of the 32nd COM was provided to both the Chairpersons of the National Experts Committee (NEC) and COM of AfricaRice, in Cairo, Egypt, by the Secretariat of COM, led by the Director General (DG) of AfricaRice, Dr Harold Roy-Macauley.

2. Opening ceremony

The DG of AfricaRice called the 32nd COM to order at about 12H20 Cairo time (10h20 GMT). He apologized for the late start due to technical hitches in the conferencing system. Thereafter, the Chairperson of the COM of AfricaRice (hereafter the Chair of COM), His Excellency Al-Sayed el-Quseir, Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, acknowledged the presence of his peers, for those who were absent, their designated representatives, members of NEC, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (BoT) of AfricaRice, the DG and staff of AfricaRice. He also acknowledged the presence of invited guests, some of whom, he said, would be making remarks.

2.1. Welcome and opening remarks by the Chairperson of COM

The Chair of COM, with pleasure and honor, expressed a warm welcome to participants at the 32nd COM. He reminded the Council that Egypt has chaired the COM of AfricaRice for three and a half years rather than the statutory two years, and that this was since the Chair of COM was handed over to Egypt by Senegal at the 31st ordinary session of COM in September 2018, in Dakar, Senegal. He said that due to the COVID-19 pandemic that emerged at the end of 2019, the 32nd COM could not be held in 2020.

The Chair of COM informed the Council that despite the effects of the COVID -19 pandemic, NEC and COM have been very active. He stated that prior to the pandemic, NEC organized its 11th biennial meeting in Cairo, Egypt, in September 2019, which resolved to strengthen partnership between AfricaRice, the Agricultural Research Center (ARC) of Egypt, and the National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) of other member countries of AfricaRice, in view of contributing to ongoing efforts to increase rice production on the continent. Restrictions in movement, imposed by countries to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, hampered the effective implementation of the resolution. The Chair of COM expressed optimism that this partnership initiative will be followed up by the incoming Chair of COM.

He further informed the Council that Egypt was able to provide support to strategic actions of the Association during the challenging period of the pandemic. These actions included the organization of several virtual meetings and consultations requiring the NEC and Council's decision on urgent matters, notably the electronic no-objection endorsement of the adherence of AfricaRice to One CGIAR in September 2020, the review of amendments proposed to the AfricaRice Constitution, and a near final draft of the new Rice Research and Innovation strategy for Africa.

The Chair of COM commended the DG of AfricaRice and his team for their efforts and dexterity in ensuring the continued growth of AfricaRice during Egypt's tenure as Chair of the Association. He noted the maintenance of stable of financial resources, the several in-roads made in rice research that are contributing to increasing rice productivity and production and creating positive impacts on the lives of poor rice farmers in Africa. He also referred to the laurels won by the Center as rewards for its excellence demonstrated in rice research for development. He reminded the Council, however, of the growing importance of the climate crisis that he referred to as an issue of major concern to Egypt as well as most African countries and the entire globe. He pointed out that Egypt, for example, is one of the countries in Africa that is already experiencing drastic changes in the climate, with rapidly dwindling freshwater availability, especially for irrigated crop production. He stressed the need for continued action by all in addressing this challenge.

The Chair of COM also commended the BoT and Management of AfricaRice for improvements made to the Center's financial health and unqualified opinions from External Auditors, despite three years' operations under a critical financial situation.

The Chair of COM further reminded the Council that 50 years after the Association was created as the first pan-African agricultural research center of member states to lead knowledge-based rice research for development on the continent, the Association should be proud to celebrate its golden jubilee and more especially the center's significant impact on the rice sector in Africa. He expressed his delight with results delivered from a recent tracer study conducted on long-term and large-scale impact of the center on the continent, which stated that **15 million** people were lifted out of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa in 2021, an amount of **US\$ 37 billion** was recorded as cumulative gross research benefit, and an amount of **US\$ 3.49** was generated for every dollar invested in research. He informed the Council that a brochure detailing these impacts will be launched by the incoming Chair of COM during this 32nd COM, to mark the start of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Association.

He thanked members of NEC and invited partners for the valuable recommendations to COM resulting from their two-day technical meeting, prior to the 32nd COM. The Chair of COM reminded the Council that the task of this 32nd COM will be to review the recommendations put forward by NEC as well as any other issues the Council may deem necessary, and to endorse recommendations as decisions with relevant resolutions, aimed at enhancing the performance of the Association. He called on Council members for their active participation, wished the Council very successful deliberations, and reiterated his warm welcome to participants at the 32nd COM.

2.2. Introduction and quorum

The Chair of COM requested members and/or their representatives as well as guests to introduce themselves by putting their country, name, and designation on the chat box. The presence of a total of 19 out of 28 member countries, represented by their ministers and/or officially designated representatives, were recorded and formed a quorum (Annex 1). The following member countries were represented: **Benin (Minister)**, **Burkina Faso (Minister)**, Cameroon, **Chad (Minister)**, Côte d'Ivoire, **Egypt (Minister)**, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, **Madagascar (Minister)**, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, The Gambia, Togo, Uganda.

2.3. Election of officers of the 32nd COM

The Chair of COM called for volunteers to the offices of Vice Chairperson and rapporteurs for the 32nd COM. Motions of acceptance of the following officers were moved and seconded: The Honorable Minister of Agricultural Development of Chad, Madame Kamougué Déné-Assoum, as Vice Chairperson; The Honorable Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Madagascar, Mr Harifidy Ramilison, and the Representative of the Honorable Minister of Agriculture of The Gambia, Dr Demba B. Jallow, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture of The Gambia, as rapporteurs. The Chair of COM thanked them for volunteering to act in these positions.

2.4. Good will message

The Chair of COM was delighted about the presence of distinguished guests invited to the meeting as observers and reiterated his thanks to them for their continuous and active support to the Association. He said that as AfricaRice joins One CGIAR and as it seeks additional mechanisms to raise funds, the Center needs their support, now more than ever before. He then invited the Vice President for Finance and Corporate

Services of the ECOWAS Bank of Investment and Development (EBID), Dr Mabouba Diagne, to present a goodwill message.

Dr Diagne expressed his gratitude for the opportunity given to him to address the 32nd COM. He then, on behalf of the President of EBID, Dr George Donkor, expressed the Bank's readiness and willingness to support AfricaRice and the ECOWAS region in the drive to put in place innovative financing structures that would allow the region to have sustained access to sufficient amount and high-quality rice seeds. He stated that the thrust of his message, on behalf of the bank, is to work with partners in reducing Africa's food import bill, which currently stands at about US\$ 35 billion and which risks skyrocketing to US\$ 135 billion by 2030 if urgent steps are not taken now. He reaffirmed that EBID has the expertise, the financial muscle, and the willingness to work with AfricaRice and governments of ECOWAS to establish a financing vehicle that would support the production of sufficient amounts of high-quality rice seeds. He drew the Council's attention to the fact that within a space of twelve months, the price of fertilizers has experienced an increase from below US\$ 300 to over US\$ 900, adding that this could consequently have an impact on the cost of rice production and distribution. Dr Diagne stated that he will be delighted to lead the bank's team should an extraordinary meeting be scheduled together with AfricaRice, and the 15 Ministers of ECOWAS, aimed at deciphering a most plausible financing solution.

The Chair of COM expressed gratitude to the Vice President of Finance and Corporate Services of EBID for this important goodwill message and the readiness of EBID to work with AfricaRice.

2.5. Adoption of the agenda

The Chair of COM led the members of COM in the review and adoption of the 32nd COM meeting agenda (Annex 2).

3. Proceedings of the Meeting

The Chair of COM informed participants that there would a closed session at some stage during the meeting, and those invited observers would be moved to another virtual room during that session.

3.1. Review of Minutes of the 31st ordinary session of COM and status of implementation of resolutions

The Chair of COM requested any observations or comments on the minutes and the status of implementation of the resolutions of the 31st ordinary session of COM, which was held in September 2018, under the

chairmanship of the Honorable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Senegal, Dr Abdoulaye Papa Seck. With no observations from COM, a motion of adoption of the minutes and the status of implementation of the resolutions of the 31st ordinary session of COM was moved and seconded.

3.2. Report of the Chairperson of the BoT of AfricaRice to COM

The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of AfricaRice (henceforth the Board Chair) expressed her honor and pleasure to address COM. She recalled that the unexpected and extremely significant events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects, the increasing effects of climate change, and the perils of war, are affecting the ways of doing business globally. She expressed her belief that in the face of these adversaries, AfricaRice and One CGIAR have continued to play their part in supporting actions that foster resilience among communities, professionals, and partners.

The Board Chair affirmed that the AfricaRice-led 2030 Rice Research and Innovation Strategy for Africa was designed to deliver on the five impact areas of the One CGIAR 2030 Strategy as well as on the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. The strategy, she said, is also aligned to the goals of member countries as well as the priorities of a very large cross section of stakeholders of the rice sector in- and outside of Africa.

The Board Chair noted that the current One CGIAR reforms have gone the farthest than all previous ones and made the most rapid progress with its aim of unifying partnerships, knowledge, and assets, and addressing the complex challenges of food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis. She stressed the importance of the value propositions of both AfricaRice and One CGIAR in these reforms, which, she said, are characterized by the following features: (i) the mobilization of global intellectual, material, and financial resources, (ii) a 10-year unique Research and Innovation Strategy, (iii) an institutional framework with unified governance and leadership, (iv) a performance and results framework, and (v) an approved set of 32 global and regional research initiatives that address a broader range of regional issues and strengthen CGIAR's partnerships with the NARS, to transform the rice sector in Africa. She informed the Council of the appointment of the current DG of AfricaRice to the position of Regional Director of the East and Southern Africa region, one of the six regions in which One CGIAR would roll out its agenda and indicated that this appointment is a demonstration of the efforts of both AfricaRice and One CGIAR to mutualize their value propositions. She indicated that the proposed amendments to the Constitution of AfricaRice, being presented to the 32nd COM for endorsement, will enable alignment of AfricaRice governance system with those of One CGIAR. She indicated that the One CGIAR process could benefit from the political legitimacy and institutional

support the COM provides; these being central to AfricaRice's constituency. She stated that the benefits of a transformation of the COM of AfricaRice, from a center-specific organ, which in any way will continue, into a high-level continental platform for the CGIAR brand, could result in a strategic move that would place the CGIAR at levels of national and regional authorities, which it merits as an international organization. She encouraged COM to reflect on this plausible trajectory that should further elevate its importance.

She informed COM that the process of establishing an institutional alliance between AfricaRice and IRRI was overtaken by the One CGIAR process. The BoT of AfricaRice had no choice but to stop that process and focus more on a programmatic alliance, which will better position the two Centers to join One CGIAR.

The Board Chair acknowledged the effort deployed by AfricaRice staff, which resulted in the award of significant research and development honors. She also acknowledged the financial recovery of the Center from a period of budget deficits prior to 2019. She once again commended the staff of AfricaRice for their steadfast service rendered to the Association throughout this difficult period. She indicated that the BoT has made efforts to palliate the challenges faced by staff of the Center with the payment of one-off annual bonuses. She also urged for progress to be made in the discussions on innovative financing mechanisms during this COM meeting, to enable the development and consideration of a set of proposals that could foster effective partnerships with the private sector.

The Board Chair finally informed COM that the current DG of AfricaRice, Dr Roy-Macauley, has expressed the desire to end his contract with AfricaRice at the end of the year 2022. She expressed gratitude to the DG for services rendered to AfricaRice and informed COM that the Board would recommend an immediate initiation of a suitable international recruitment process for his replacement. She reiterated her thanks to the COM for giving her the opportunity to present this report and wished COM successful deliberations.

3.3. Remarks by Council members

The Chair of COM thanked the Board Chair for her remarks and requested whether COM members had remarks to make. Members of COM, notably from Cameroon, Benin, Madagascar, Burkina Faso, and Chad, roundly commended Management for the achievements of the Center and particularly for adhering to One CGIAR. They expressed the desire to see a more consolidated partnership relationship with member countries as well as more efforts being deployed by AfricaRice in the mobilization of the necessary resources and means to respond to the food and nutrition security needs of African countries. Specifically, the Council members posited that AfricaRice joining One CGIAR should bring added gravitas as the African continent

strives to attain rice self-sufficiency. The members also expressed the need for greater rapprochement of One CGIAR to Regional Economic Communities on the continent.

3.4. Biennial report of the Director General

The report of the DG of AfricaRice highlighted key strategic achievements of the center between the period of 2019 to 2022 in the following areas:

Advocacy: The DG informed COM that the Center has continued to strengthen strategic partnerships with member states as well as regional institutions. He also informed COM that a new Host Country Agreement was secured with Liberia in 2020. He added that efforts made to strengthen partnerships with national institutions has continued to foster the delivery of appropriate knowledge, technologies, policy options to member countries as well as policy advice to ECOWAS and UEMOA, for boosting rice sector development in Africa and raising donor's confidence. He noted that strategic partnerships have led to improved funding notably from BMGF, IFAD, BMZ, and a more stabilized financial health of the institution. The DG informed COM that the Center led a significant response action to urgent food security programs, which aimed at palliating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on rice production in some countries, notably Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria, Mali, Niger, and Sierra Leone.

Organizational changes: The DG informed COM of the following structural changes that were implemented at AfricaRice to strengthen management's capacity in delivering on the mission of the Center and also in aligning with sister CGIAR Centers to enable increased effective and efficient partnerships: (i) Strategic Partnerships Directorate' renamed 'Strategic Business Initiatives Directorate'; (ii) Finance Directorate renamed Finance and Corporate Services Directorate; (iii) Creation of a new position of 'Chief of Staff'; (iv) the DDG & DR4D post revised to DR4D in 2020 and further revised to 'Research and Innovation Lead' in 2021, in line with One CGIAR.

Research and development (R&D): According to the DG, key achievements from R&D's four Programs include the following: Genetic Diversity and Improvement (GDI) Program: (a) Increase in rice accessions in the Center's Genebank from 21,291 in 2018 to 22,304 in 2022; (b) Modernization of the breeding program through mainly the introduction of Rapid Generation Advance with single seed descent, which reduces breeding cycle by 50%, product profiling, and digitalization; (c) Release of forty-four (44) improved rice varieties in 10 African countries (Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda); and (d) Evaluation of 78 lines in national trials in 11 countries. Sustainable Productivity Enhancement (SPE) program: (a) Toolkits for mapping suitable inland valleys for rice production and

improving water use efficiency in paddy fields ; (b) Decision-making mobile tools such as the RiceAdvice-WeedManager and RiceAdvice–direct management of fertilizer application by farmers; (c) Knowledge generated for intensifying and diversifying rice production included the introduction of perennial rice which has a strong ratooning ability thus ensuring high yields with lower planting costs, and integrated rice-vegetable and rice-fish systems for improved income and nutrition; (d) Innovations for reducing drudgery and pollution, including a Small GEM parboiler fueled by rice husks instead of firewood; and, (e) New rice biofortification protocols for contributing to improved nutrition. *Policy, Innovation Systems, and Impact Assessment (PII) Program:* (a) An effective, efficient, and low-cost starter kit including seed, fertilizer, and irrigation cost, was developed for increasing farmers resilience to climate change; (b) Empirical data that affirm that youth entrepreneurship promoted along rice value chain increased income and created jobs; that the RiceAdvice decision-making tool recommendations increased yields and profits with a 20% increase in yield (730 kg/ha) and 23% increase in profit (\$275/ha), that Smart-valleys are more efficient in increasing food security of female-headed households by 11 points against 9 points for men, and that rice self-sufficiency in SSA could be achieved by raising and maintaining yield at 3% a year driven by increasing rice cultivated area by 5.5% a year, and prioritizing investments in demand-pull. *Rice Sector Development (RSD) Program:* (a) High yielding inbred and hybrid varieties supplied to seed enterprises and governments resulting in improved uptake/adoption, and (b) Smart-Valley technology scaled out that benefitted 14,027 farmers in 2021.

The DG reported that key research and development outputs under these four programs were reported in a total of 172 published articles, with 106 published in Science Citation Index (SCI) and Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) journals and 68 as Open Access publications.

Awards and honours received by the Center: The DG informed COM that some of the outcome of the outstanding research work conducted by AfricaRice included the following awards: (i) The Al-Sumait Food Security Award in 2019, from KFAS, Kuwait, for enhancing food security in Africa (as a co-awardee of a prize of US\$ 1 million); (ii) The Republic of Korea Presidential Award of Achievement in 2021 for partnership with RDA under KAFACI; (iii) The American Society of Agronomy (ASA) Emerging Leader for African Agricultural Transformation (ELAAT) Award in 2021, to Dr Ali Ibrahim, AfricaRice Systems Agronomist and Soil Scientist; (iv) The One Planet Fellowship Award in 2021 to Mr Jean-Martial Johnson, AfricaRice Research Associate, for work on climate change; (v) The Norman Borlaug Award for Field Research and Application in 2021, to Dr Elliott Dossou-Yovo, AfricaRice Scientist for work on innovative water management systems; and (vi) The

Japanese Society of Crop Science Best Paper Award in 2020 to AfricaRice Scientist, Dr Kazuki Saito, for paper on improving N-use efficiency for rice production in sub-Saharan Africa.

The new 2030 Rice Research and Innovation Strategy for Africa led by AfricaRice: The DG informed COM that this new strategy replaces the 2011 – 2020 AfricaRice Strategic plan. According to the DG, the new Strategy envisions contributing to the improvement of food and nutrition security, health, and prosperity in Africa. The new strategy is aligned to the 2030 One CGIAR Research and Innovation Strategy but more importantly considers key priorities including national rice strategies of member states, and strategies of continental and sub-regional research organizations in Africa. He informed COM that the strategy has been reviewed by the Board of Trustees of AfricaRice and is hereby being presented to the 32nd COM for review and endorsement, as is statutorily required, to enable the Center to lead its implementation.

Pass-through funds from AfricaRice to member state institutions: The DG informed the 32nd COM that the center's pass-through funds to member countries, for the purposes of carrying out research and innovations, totaled US\$ 9.11 million during the period of 2018 to 2021.

Financial situation of the Center: The DG informed the COM that significant improvement in the financial health of the center was attributable to the center's implementation of a 3-year (2018 – 2020) Financial Recovery Plan (FRP). He reported that AfricaRice mobilized a total revenue of about US\$ 39.9 million (2019 to 2021) through 39 donor-funded grants. He said that the financial performance could be assessed through the reserve days, which were estimated at 90, 96, 111, and 94 days respectively in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. This, he said, portrayed an appreciable level of financial viability of the Center.

Member state contributions: The DG informed the 32nd COM that against expectations, little progress was made in recovering the arrears of member states contribution between 2018 to 2022. He said that an average amount of US\$ 0.202 received was from between 3 to 7 countries, as distinct from the expected annual amount of US\$ 0.697 million. He also informed COM that total arrears in annual contributions due to the Center from the members states stood at US\$ 5.8 million.

The Center's human assets: The COM was informed that a review of the status of the human assets of the center indicated an appreciable staff retention rate during the period, with a total of 200 staff including 33 internationally recruited staff and 167 general support staff. The DG said that the Center has continued to make improvements in the working conditions of the staff to ensure effective delivery of the Center's mission. He added that the improvements have also been made in its gender balance outlook with the proportion of female employees rising from 18% in 2019 to 23% in 2021.

On governance: The DG reported that the governance instruments have remained fully operational and have provided appropriate oversight to the management of the Center. He informed the COM that the BoT held seven (7) ordinary sessions between 2019 and 2021, during which it continued to focus on its oversight role. The 32nd COM was informed that the National Experts Committee (NEC) held its biennial meeting in Cairo, Egypt, in September 2019. NEC also met twice, virtually, in 2020 and recommended that COM approve the proposed adherence of AfricaRice to One CGIAR. Two other special meetings of NEC were held virtually in 2021 during which the NEC examined proposed amendments to the AfricaRice Constitution.

Relationships with CGIAR System Organization: The DG informed COM that interactions between AfricaRice and the CGIAR System Organization focussed on the participation of AfricaRice in the implementation of the recommendations endorsed by the System Council for the transition to One CGIAR and on AfricaRice joining One CGIAR. He stated that a decision of the BoT of AfricaRice in consultation with Management of AfricaRice led to the endorsement of a resolution by COM for AfricaRice to join One CGIAR. The DG highlighted some engagements of AfricaRice in support of the transition to One CGIAR, including proposing amendments to the AfricaRice Constitution to facilitate alignment to the governance and operational framework of One CGIAR. He also mentioned the participation of BoT members, Management, and staff of AfricaRice in several key transition actions. He also informed the Council that the DG of AfricaRice was appointed the Regional Director of the One CGIAR for East and Southern Africa Region, one of the six global regions where One CGIAR is rolling out its agenda. The COM was informed that within the context of aligning to the operational framework of One CGIAR, a One CGIAR staff affiliation process was conducted to migrate AfricaRice staff to various structural units of One CGIAR.

Impact of AfricaRice operations on the Continent: The DG informed COM about assessments carried out that revealed that 15 million people were lifted out of poverty due to AfricaRice innovations and that for every US\$ 1 invested in AfricaRice research a benefit of US\$ 3.49 was generated. He posited that this information strongly indicates that investments in the work of AfricaRice need to be pursued especially to vigorously disseminate the center's innovations that would contribute to attaining rice self-sufficiency and livelihood improvement in Africa. He informed the COM that, through research, the following improvements have been made (iii) increase in rice self-sufficiency ratio in SSA in 2018 to 59% that would have been 37% without the innovations of AfricaRice, and (iv) increase in the number of countries (Egypt, Mali, Madagascar, Nigeria, and Tanzania) with rice self-sufficiency ratio over 75% in 2020.

Outlook for rice production in Africa: The DG informed COM that the center is expected to achieve the following goals over the next eight (8) years: (i) Complete adherence to One CGIAR for the benefit of member countries of the Association; (ii) Consolidated partnership mechanisms and business models involving stakeholders of the rice sector in Africa, especially the private sector to facilitate sustainable production and uptake of rice innovations; (iii) establishment of a strategic support Unit which would monitor the status of Rice Self Sufficiency in Africa; and (iv) Strengthening the capacity development unit particularly in the area of measuring impact of the training value chain actors of Africa's rice sector.

3.5. Observations raised by COM on the DG's Biennial Report

The 32nd COM roundly commended the DG for his biennial report and made the following key observations: (a) the need for the DG to include in the report the "physical execution of the center", which will facilitate reviews that will result in identifying gaps that need to be filled through member countries actions; (b) the need for greater visibility of the work carried out by AfricaRice in the Central Africa region of the continent, coupled with a clearer demonstration of how countries in the Central Africa region may benefit from the One CGIAR – such visibility, it was posited, should be self-advocating for increased funding to the center from both member states, donors and private investors; (c) the need, expressed by some members, for a better and wider distribution of AfricaRice activities and impact around the continent; (d) the request for making available and ensuring wider distribution of seeds of improved rice varieties to ensure increased and sustained productivity of the rice sector in Africa; (e) the need emphasized for similar attention to be given to the delivery of knowledge and products for potential production ecologies such as upland and mangrove ecologies, as is given to lowland ecologies; (f) the need to forge new partnerships and alliances and to continue strengthening existing collaborations aimed at enhancing the development of the rice sector in Africa; and, (g) the request for information on the level of arrears in country contributions that are owed by individual member countries.

The Chair of COM expressed gratitude to members of COM for their interventions and requested the DG of AfricaRice to note and translated comments made into actions points of the Association.

3.6. Report of NEC's technical review of dossiers tabled to the 32nd COM

The Chair of COM invited the Chairperson of NEC to present the report of NEC on its technical review of dossiers tabled to the 32nd COM.

The Chairperson of NEC informed COM that NEC held a two-day meeting on March 28 and 29, 2022, during which the Committee reviewed all documents meant for the 32nd COM consideration (Annex 3). He stated that in the light of commendations and discussions resulting from key concerns raised by the NEC and the adequate response and clarification provided by Management on the dossiers examined, the NEC made recommendations to be endorsed by the COM, which are summarized as follows:

- (i) The proposed amendments to the Constitution and that AfricaRice Management ensures that the revised Constitution is signed by all member countries through electronic means.
- (ii) The elements of the New 2030 Rice Research and Innovation Strategy for Africa and that the Board and Management proceed to finalizing and publishing the new Strategy within a reasonable timeframe.
- (iii) The request from Management to initiate the establishment of an innovative financing mechanism to maximize the financial resources of AfricaRice and contribute to the sustainable operations of the Institution, based on a public private partnership and market-led financial transaction of rice knowledge and products delivered by research with reference to rice seeds. It recommends that AfricaRice takes the lead in this initiative and should work with its partner national agricultural research institutions and other relevant partners including the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) to establish the most appropriate mechanism for impact-oriented implementation.
- (iv) The Choice of Madagascar as member country Chairing the Council of Ministers of the Association for the next two years.

3.7. Deliberation of COM in Closed Session

In its closed session the Chair of COM welcomed his peers and designated representatives to the closed session of the 32nd COM. He stated that the goal of this business session is solely to consider the recommendations contained in the detailed report of the NEC. The Chair of COM thereafter invited reactions from members aimed at crafting resolutions that should continue to add value to strengthening the Association. He also called upon members to make specific reactions to the remarks of the Board Chair in which she informed the Council about the DG's contract, which she said would end by December 2022, and therefore the need to launch a search for a new DG. As regards the launching of the 50th Anniversary of AfricaRice, the Chairperson suggested that the incoming Chairperson of COM, in his closing remarks,

launches the 50th celebrations of AfricaRice and refer to this Impact brochure as a symbol of the launching of the Celebrations.

3.8. Reaction from members of COM

On the amendment of the Constitution, Council members expressed their satisfaction with the inclusion of a clause that calls for consensus-seeking from all AfricaRice Board members on issues requiring decision-making of the Board. It was posited as a fair way of resolving issues concerning the operations and life of the Association, and therefore requested the Board Chair and the Director General to ensure that consensus seeking during decision-making by the Board is observed. The Council members roundly felicitated the DG for conceptualizing the initiative on innovative financing and urged that a business plan on the way forward be produced. The members stated that they were gratified to note that this initiative would encourage and entrench a culture of public-private partnerships in agricultural research for development. They also added the need for AfricaRice to ensure protection of its intellectual property rights (IPR) as well as the rights of small and medium seed enterprises and farmers. The Council members were unanimous in acknowledging the relevance of the recommendations by NEC.

3.9. Report of the Chair of COM to the plenary on deliberations of the closed session

The Chair of COM, thereafter, welcomed back invited guests and observers and reported to the plenary on the outcome of the deliberations in closed session. He reiterated the Council's acknowledgement of the very important and exciting work being done by the BoT and Management of AfricaRice, especially during the very difficult period of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also noted that the Center was able to stabilize its financial situation and deliver, jointly with partners, very important results that are benefitting the rice sector in Africa. He brought to the attention of the Council the huge arrears in annual contributions owed by member countries up to the tune of about US\$ 5.8 million and implored member countries to make all efforts to defray their annual contributions and arrears owed to the Center. He stated that the Council encouraged the BoT and Management of AfricaRice to continue to explore all avenues with donors, to assist member countries in defraying the arrears, especially through contributions from budgets of rice value chain projects being implemented in the countries. The Chair of COM informed the plenary that the Council welcomes the idea of establishing innovative initiatives of raising financial resources through partnerships with the private sector, which will help contribute to sustaining the Center's operations. He also added that the Council acknowledges and appreciates the support declared by the Vice President of Finance and Corporate services of the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development in his goodwill message, in relationship with the

establishment of such a financing mechanism with AfricaRice and hoped that other models will follow-through in other regions of Africa. The Council acknowledged the very important work carried out by the BoT and Management of AfricaRice, especially in its engagement with One CGIAR to align their governance and operational frameworks. He added that the Council is aware of the complex nature of the One CGIAR transition process and encourages the BoT and Management of AfricaRice to pursue the work with One CGIAR. The Chair of COM also stated that the Council encourages One CGIAR to take into consideration, during the transition process, the mission and critical role of the Center to member countries, the special support provided by countries hosting the Center's headquarters and stations, and the various clauses of the Constitution of the Association. The Chair of COM informed the plenary that the Council is expecting that One CGIAR will, while it rolls out its full agenda, provide all the support necessary for AfricaRice to strengthen its capacity, catalyze the necessary and required partnerships and resources for delivering on the mission accorded to it by its 28 member-countries of strengthening the rice sector and ensuring rice self-sufficiency in Africa.

The Council acknowledged the important large-scale impact created by rice innovations delivered through research, development, and partnership activities carried out by AfricaRice and its partners over 50 years of its existence. He expressed the satisfaction of the Council as regards AfricaRice pursuing its mission through the newly established 2030 Rice Research and Innovation strategy for Africa, which has been aligned to the 2030 Research and Innovation strategy of One CGIAR. According to the Chair of COM, such alignment represents a positive sign of the Center's willingness to also align to the operational framework of One CGIAR. He said the Council noted that this new strategy has taken into consideration additional emerging and complex challenges of the rice sector in member countries in Africa, especially the climate crisis, nutrition, and health. He reminded Management to consider including additional issues raised by members of COM in finalizing the strategy. Furthermore, the Chair of COM informed the plenary that the Council is happy to note that research approach will be on rice-based agri-food systems in member states in Africa, which will lead to the continued delivery of knowledge and appropriate technological and institutional innovations as well as policies that will enhance water use efficiency and reduce such greenhouse gases as methane emissions, produce more nutritious and healthy foods, and ensure the sustainable production of rice in farmer's field. The Chair of COM informed participants that the Council recognizes the importance given to appropriate partnerships, especially with national agricultural research institutions as well as with the private sector, in the strategy, which will facilitate learning, increased uptake by beneficiaries of rice innovations to eventually deliver positive impacts on the livelihoods of the African population.

In the light of these observations, acknowledgements, and recognitions, he declared that the 32nd COM is pleased to announce that it has endorsed the following elements:

1. The proposed amendments to the Constitution and stating that AfricaRice Management should ensure that after finalization of the revised Constitution, it is signed by all member countries through electronic means.
2. The New 2030 Rice Research and Innovation Strategy for Africa and stating that the Board of Trustees and Management of AfricaRice should proceed to finalizing the strategy taking into consideration concerns of COM as regards covering the different rice ecologies in Africa relevant to member countries and publishing the new Strategy within a reasonable timeframe.
3. The request from Management to initiate the establishment of an innovative financing mechanism to maximize the financial resources of AfricaRice and contribute to the sustainable operations of the Institution, based on a public private partnership and market-led financial transaction of rice knowledge and products delivered by research, and especially rice seeds. The Chair of COM declared that the COM encourages AfricaRice to work with its partner national agricultural research institutions such as the Agricultural Research Center of Egypt that already have appropriate related models, Development banks such as the ECOWAS Bank of Investment and Development (EBID), private sector institutions and other relevant funders who might be interested in such partnerships. It further stated that AfricaRice should take into considerations the concerns raised by COM as regards the establishment of business plan including the sharing of benefits between AfricaRice and the NARIs, intellectual property rights issues and measures for the protection of farmers rights.
4. The choice of Madagascar as member state chairing the Council of Ministers of the Association for the next two years, stating that the incoming chair should ensure, amongst other activities, that very important partnerships mechanisms such as the partnership framework initiated by AfricaRice, the Agricultural Research Centre of Egypt and the other 27 National Agricultural Research Institutes for rice germplasm exchange, training and increased rice production in member states, and that was slowed down by the COVID-19 pandemic, be fully deployed.
5. The search for, by the Board of Trustees of AfricaRice, and the appointment by the COM of a new Director General of AfricaRice to be completed by the end of contract of the present DG, in December 2022, stating that if for any reason the process goes beyond the end date of the contract of the

current DG, the DG's contract should be extended until such a time the recruitment process is completed.

The Chair of COM stated that the 32nd COM also reviewed the recommendations from NEC, which it translates into the following resolutions adopted at this 32nd COM.

Resolutions

1. **Member States** should endeavor to pay their annual contributions in a timely manner and pay all their arrears by the end of 2023.
2. **The NARIs of member States of AfricaRice and AfricaRice Management** should establish and execute plans for rendering more visible AfricaRice as well as its research products to governments of members States of AfricaRice.
3. **The member States and the Management of AfricaRice** should work with Development banks such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) to exploit ways and means of sourcing a one-off payment of arrears of annual contribution of each member State, from rice value chain projects, where possible.
4. **AfricaRice Management** should lead the development of an innovative financing mechanism involving partnerships with the private sector and market-led financing approaches, to raise additional funds for sustaining the operations of AfricaRice, with considerations given to the development of solid business models, benefit sharing especially between AfricaRice and its partner NARIs of member States, intellectual property rights issues as well as measures for the protection of farmers' rights.
5. **AfricaRice Management** should support member States in using strategic information derived from the Continental Investment Plan for accelerating Rice Self Sufficiency in Africa (CIPRiSSA), established for 11 countries with support from AfricaRice, to advocate for investments that would lead to increased performance of rice value chains and the attainment of rice self-sufficiency in member States.
6. **AfricaRice Management** should consolidate its links with NARIs, sub-regional research and innovation institutions, and regional economic communities, especially in the Central and Southern African regions of the continent, in a bid to strengthen their capacity in rice research and development and the policy environment, to enable the creation of impact on livelihood of the African populace.
7. **The Board of Trustees and Management of AfricaRice and One CGIAR** should pursue their work in aligning their governance and operational frameworks, without compromising the tenets of the AfricaRice Constitution and disrupting the privileges AfricaRice benefits from its host countries.

8. **One CGIAR** in its partnership with AfricaRice, should provide all the necessary support to AfricaRice that will contribute to strengthening the capacity of AfricaRice as well as that of its partner NARIs in member States, thus facilitating delivery on the mission accorded to AfricaRice by its 28 member States, of strengthening the rice sector and attaining rice self-sufficiency in Africa.

4. Any other Business

The COM did not declare any other business to address.

5. Closing of the 32nd ordinary session of COM

5.1. Vote of thanks

Vote of thanks to the government and people of Egypt by Dr Ambrose Agona, the DG of the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) of Uganda, and designated representative of Minister of Agriculture of Uganda.

On behalf of the Association of AfricaRice, the 32nd COM, NEC and AfricaRice Management, Dr Agona applauded the Government and people of Egypt for their warm and cordial reception accorded since the in-person meeting held in September 2019; during subsequent meetings of the NEC held virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic period; for the support provided to the Management of AfricaRice during the preparation of the 32nd COM convening; and for the financial, material, and human resources provided during all these meetings. He, on behalf of the delegates of the 32nd COM, expressed wholeheartedly thanks to H.E. the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt; the Honorable Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation of Egypt; the President of the Agricultural Research Centre of Egypt, and the people of Egypt for their warm hospitality, kind-heartedness, and friendship. He requested permission to salute the Honorable Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation and the President of the Agricultural Research Centre of Egypt, respectively, for the competency exercised in chairing COM and NEC, during the last four years despite the COVID-19 pandemic challenges. He confirmed that their un-relenting efforts resulted in steering the Association in the right direction for greater heights. He said that the COM strongly believes that with support from the AfricaRice Centre under the One CGIAR framework, the Association members, especially those with budding economies, shall make a quantum leap into the 4th Industrial Revolution, as they harness and exploit their different bio-diversities in the name of agro-industrialization and commercialization, through application of modern rice-based technologies and innovations; not-withstanding the contributions to food and nutrition security; job and wealth creation; and above all skilling the youth in agri-entrepreneurship. He

reiterated his thanks to the Chair of COM, applauded all participants and wished all who travelled, journey mercies back home.

5.2. Closing remarks of the outgoing Chair of COM

The outgoing Chair of COM acknowledged the presence of his honorable colleague Ministers, members of COM, the Board Chair, and the DG of AfricaRice, and invited guests. He stated that the 32nd COM has now come to the end. He stated that the meeting has been convivial and expressed his sincere thanks to all who took part in the meeting, which, he said, considered strategic issues related to the business of the Association. He pointed out that Egypt's mandate as Chair of COM will be ending and that Madagascar will be taking-over the Chair of COM during this meeting. He congratulated the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Madagascar, the Honorable Mr Harifidy Ramilison, on his accession to this position and wished him and Madagascar a successful tenure. He expressed joy for having served the Council and thanked colleague Ministers for the support given to him and Egypt during his tenure. He expressed his sincere gratitude to the financial and technical partners of AfricaRice for their continued support to the Association. He also expressed gratitude to the NEC of AfricaRice for its technical and judiciousness review of all the issues it was presented with. He pointed out that NEC, led by the President of the Agricultural research Center of Egypt, Dr Mohamed Soliman, has been effective in delivering on its mission despite the challenges and risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted the excellent coordination established between the AfricaRice Management and NEC led by Dr Soliman, which ensured that Council members were appropriately briefed on strategic issues affecting the life of the Association. He once again used the opportunity to express gratitude to the DG of AfricaRice, Dr Harold Roy-Macauley, the Secretary of the Council of Ministers of AfricaRice, for his steadfastness in leading AfricaRice during the last four years. He appreciated his person as an invaluable and indefatigable asset to the center. He also commended staff members of AfricaRice, whom he noticed the DG has so effectively mobilized, resulting in the delivery of the award-winning research outputs and outcomes of AfricaRice. He once again thanked all participants at the 32nd COM and stakeholders of the rice sector in Africa for their continued support to ensure that the continent attains rice self-sufficiency.

5.3. Closing remarks of the incoming Chair of COM

The in-coming Chair of COM, the Honorable Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Madagascar, Mr Harifidy Ramilison, acknowledged the presence of distinguished members of the COM of AfricaRice and invited guests. He went on to inform the Council that he led the expression of interest in Madagascar Chairing

the Council for the next two years because of his love for rice and a strong desire to contribute effectively to the development of the rice sector in Africa, in general, and in Madagascar and countries of the Indian Ocean Community (IOC), in particular. He said that it was also an opportunity for him to exploit his several years of experience working with the Coalition of African Rice Development (CARD) to further strengthen the partnership between members of CARD for a more effective contribution to strengthening the rice sector in Africa. He thanked members of the Council for accepting Madagascar's proposal to Chair COM for the next two years. The in-coming Chair thanked Egypt for the exceptional patience it has had in leading the Association for four years, from 2018 to 2022, two years beyond the statutory chairmanship period of two years. He pledged that despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, he would do his utmost best to support the Management of AfricaRice in its mission to satisfy member countries demands as regards boosting their rice sector and particularly in implementing the resolutions of 32nd COM. He drew the attention of COM to the fact that the establishment of the Association and its Constitution was enacted by law on June 24, 1971, in Cotonou, Benin. He further added that the Association should have celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2021, but that this was hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. He pointed out that the onus has, therefore, fallen on him to launch the 50th Anniversary celebrations of AfricaRice during this 32nd COM. He informed COM that Management will roll out a plan for the celebrations and provide the necessary information on the way forward. The in-coming COM Chair gladly announced that in launching the 50th Anniversary Celebrations a powerful brochure that describes long-term and large-scale impact of the work realized by AfricaRice has been published released to the public. He informed COM that Management will be sharing both the English and French versions of this brochure with the NEC, COM, all member state institutions and partners. He once again thanked COM for their support in selecting Madagascar to Chair the Association over the next two years. He thereafter declared the 32nd COM closed.

END

Annex 1: List of Participants at the 32nd COM

N°	Country/Pays	Name/Nom	Function/Fonction	Address/Contact
Members of the Council of Ministers and/or their delegated representatives				
1	Benin	S.E M. Gaston Cossi DOSSOUHOUI	Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Elevage et de la Pêche	Rue 371, Cotonou, Benin E-mail DG : cgdossouhoui@gmail.com
2	Egypt	H.E . Al-Sayed el- Quseir	Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation	1, Wezaret AL Zeraa Street-Dokki-Giza email : min.officesector@agr-egypt.gov.eg / arcpresident@arc.sci.eg
3	Burkina Faso	S.E M. Pr Frédéric OUATTARA	Ministre de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Recherche Scientifique et de l'Innovation	Boulevard de l'indépendance, 03 BP 7130 Ouagadougou 03 E: cabinet.messrs@yahoo.fr
4	Madagascar	S.E M. Harifidy Ramilison	Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Élevage et de la Pêche	Anosy- Antananarivo 101 Antananarivo Private E: r.harifidy@moov.mg Office E : minae.ministre@gmail.com
5	Niger	S.E M. Alambedji Abba Issa	Ministre de l'Agriculture	BP 12091 Niamey Office E:
6	Tchad	S.E Mme Kamougué Née Déné-Assoum	Ministre du Développement Agricole	Avenue Charles De gaulle BP 0441 N'Djamena Email:
7	Cameroun	Prof. NGONKEN Eddy	Représentant le ministre de la Recherche Scientifique et de l'Innovation	
8	Rwanda	Dr Octave NSHINIYIMANA	Representing the Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources	
9	Cote d'Ivoire	Prof. KOBÉA Toka Arsène	Représentant ministre de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique	Email : kobeatoka@yahoo.fr
10	Mauritanie	Mr Mohamed Moctar O. S. Mohamed	Représentant Ministre de l'Agriculture	
11	Sénégal	Dr Waly DIOUF	Représentant le ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'équipement rural	Email : walydiouf@gmail.com
12	Nigeria	Dr Aliyu Umar, Executive Director/ CEO National Cereals	Representing the Minister of Agriculture of Nigeria	p.m.b 8, Badeggi, niger state, NIGERIA Email: aliyuu91@gmail.com

		Research Institute (NCRI)		
13	The Gambia	Dr Demba B. Jallow, Director General National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI)	Representing the Minister of Agriculture of The Gambia	P.M.B. 526 Serrekunda The Gambia Email : demsondoe@yahoo.co.uk / dembatrawally@gmail.com
14	Togo	Mr. Lombo YAO, Directeur général Institut Togolais de Recherche Agronomique (ITRA)	Représentant Ministre de l' 'Agriculture du Togo	BP 1163, Lomé Email : yaolombo@yahoo.fr
15	Centrafrique	Dr Abel KPAWILINA- NAMKOÏSSE, Directeur général, Institut Centrafricain de Recherche Agronomique (ICRA)	Représentant Ministre de l'Agriculture de Afrique Centrale	BP: 908 Bangui (RCA) Email : aknamkoisse@yahoo.fr
16	Gabon	Dr Rolexin Adamas, Directeur Général Agence de Développement de l'Agriculture du Gabon (ADAG)	Représentant Ministre de l'Agriculture du Gabon	BP 4080 Libreville – Gabon Avenue de Cointet/Camp de Gaulle Email : smada@outlook.fr
17	Kenya	Dr Felister W. Makini, Deputy Director General, Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO)	Representing the Minister of Agriculture of Kenya	P.O Box 57811-00200,city Square Nairobi,Kenya Email: Felister.Makini@kalro.org
18	Uganda	Dr Ambrose Agona, Director General National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO)	Representing the Minister of Agriculture of Uganda	Plot 11-13, Lugard Avenue, P.O.Box 295, Entebbe,Uganda Email: aagona@hotmail.com / aagona@naro.go.ug / dgnaro@naro.go.ug
19	Guinee Bissau	M. João Aruth, President Institut National de Recherche Agricole (INPA)	Representing the Minister of Agriculture of Guinea Bissau	BP-505 INPA-Granja-Pessubé– Bissau Email : inpaguinebissau@gmail.com
Directors General members of National Experts Committee (NEC)				
20	Egypte	Prof Mohamed Soliman	Director general, President Agricultural Research Center (ARC)	9 Algamaa street,Giza, Egypt E-mail: m.soliman41@yahoo.com

21	Rwanda	Dr Charles BUCAGU	Deputy Director General Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB)	KK18 AVE/286 Rubirizi Kicukiro P.O. Box 5016, Kigali Email: charles.bucaqu@rab.gov.rw
22	Madagascar	Dr Lala Razafinjara	Directeur général, Centre National de Recherche Appliqué au Développement Rural (FOFIFA/CENRADERU)	FOFIFA, B.P.1690, Route d'Andraisoro Ampandrianomby, Antananarivo(101) Email : lalarazafi@yahoo.com
23	Tchad	Mr Yassine Doudoua	Directeur général Institut Tchadien de Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (ITRAD)	BP 5400, Route de Farcha N'Djaména Email : yassine.doudoua@gmail.com
24	Burkina Faso	Dr Hamidou Traoré	Directeur, Institut de l'Environnement et des Recherches Agricoles (INERA)	04 BP 8645 Ouagadougou 04,rue Guisga,BURKINA FASO Email : hamitraore8@yahoo.com htraore@hotmail.com
25	Cameroun	Dr Noe Woin	DG de l'Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement (IRAD)	62 BP 2123,Messa, Yaounde Emai : woin57@hotmail.com
26	Sénégal	Dr Omar Ndao FAYE	Représentant Directeur général Institut Sénégalais de Recherche Agricole, (ISRA)	BP 3120, Dakar – Sénégal Route des hydrocarbures, Bel-Air, Sénégal Privat E : omaendawfaye@gmail.com Office E : omarndaw.faye@isra.sn
27	Benin	Dr. Adjanooun Adolphe	Directeur général Institut National des Recherches Agricoles du Bénin (INRAB)	01B.P. 884, Cotonou, BENIN Email : adjanoouna@yahoo.fr
AfricaRice				
28	AfricaRice	Dr Carol Kramer-Le Blanc	Chairperson of the Board of Trustees	Email: ckramerleblanc@gmail.com
29	AfricaRice	Dr Harold Roy- Macauley	Director General	01 BP 4029, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire T: +225 22 48 09 10; F: +225 22 44 26 29 E-mail: H.Roy-Macauley@cgiar.org
30	AfricaRice	Dr Marcel Nwalozie	Chief of Staff	01 BP 4029, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire T: +225 22 48 09 10; F: +225 22 44 26 29 E-mail: M.Nwalozie@cgiar.org
31	AfricaRice	Prof. Abdulai Jalloh	Research and Innovation Lead	01 BP 4029, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire T: +225 22 48 09 10; F: +225 22 44 26 29 E-mail: A.Jalloh@cgiar.org
32	AfricaRice	Mme Nafissatou Ndiour-Bella	Director, Strategic Business Initiatives	01 BP 4029, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire T: +225 22 48 09 10; F: +225 22 44 26 29 E-mail: N.Ndiour-Bella@cgiar.org

33	AfricaRice	Mr Olatifede Kolade	Director of Finance	01 BP 4029, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire T: +225 22 48 09 10; F: +225 22 44 26 29 E-mail: K.Olatifede@cgiar.org
34	AfricaRice	Mme Savitri Mohapatra	Head of Marketing and Communications Department	01 BP 4029, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire T: +225 22 48 09 10; F: +225 22 44 26 29 E-mail: S.Mohapatra@cgiar.org
35	AfricaRice	Mr Kacou Christian	ICT Manager	01 BP 4029, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire T: +225 22 48 09 10; F: +225 22 44 26 29 E-mail: C.KACOU@cgiar.org
36	AfricaRice	Mrs Kouadio Vanessa	Assistant of the Director General	01 BP 4029, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire T: +225 22 48 09 10; F: +225 22 44 26 29 E-mail: V.kouadio@cgiar.org
Invited Guests (Observers)				
37	ECOWAS Bank	Dr Mabouba Diagne	Vice President, Finance and Corporate Services	128, Boulevard du 13 Janvier B.P. 2704 Lomé-Togo, Corporate Tel: +(228) 22 21 68 64 E-mail: mdiagne@bidc-ebid.org
38	MINRESI/CAMEROON	Dr. AMINA		
39	One CGIAR	Dr Alice Ruhweza	Board Member CGIAR	E-Mail: a.ruhweza@cgiar.org

Annex 2:

Agenda

32nd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers Thursday March 31, 2022

Time	Duration	Item	Facilitator/Presenter	Required COM Action
TIME IS ABIDJAN TIME				
1000	1015	Welcome and Opening Remarks by the Minister of Agriculture & Land Reclamation of Egypt, and Chair of COM	His Excellency, Al-Sayed el-Quseir	
1015	1030	Speech by AfricaRice Board Chair,	Dr Carol Kramer-LeBlanc	
1030	1035	Presentation of 32 nd COM Meeting Agenda	COM Chair/DG AfricaRice	For Adoption
1035	1050	Review of the Implementation of Resolutions of the 31 st COM	Dr Harold Roy-Macauley	For Adoption
1050	1110	Director General's Biennial Report to the 32 nd COM	Dr Harold Roy-Macauley	For Information
1110	1130	Report and Recommendations of the National Experts Committee to the COM Passing of resolutions by the COM	NEC Chair assisted by Dr Marcel Nwalozie	For Endorsement
1130	1200	Rotation of the Chair of Council of Ministers	COM Chair Assisted by DG of AfricaRice	For Endorsement
1200	1215	Launch of 50 th anniversary the Association		
1215	1230	Any Other Business: Closing Remarks of the COM by: - Out-going COM Chair - In-Coming COM Chair	COM Chair Assisted by DG of AfricaRice	
2 hours 30 mins				

Annex 3:

Report of the Virtual Meeting of the National Experts Committee (NEC) of AfricaRice Preparatory to 32nd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of AfricaRice, 28 to 29 March 2018

Hon Chairperson of the Council of Ministers of AfricaRice
Hon members of the Council of Ministers AfricaRice
Distinguished Representatives of members of the Council of Ministers of AfricaRice

Due to the time limitation, I am going to summarize the NEC report to the 32nd COM as much as possible.

Please note that the Secretariat had shared a comprehensive version, both in French and in English, with all the NEC members yesterday.

1. Opening session

The meeting of the National Experts Committee (NEC) of AfricaRice was held virtually on Monday 28th and Tuesday 29th March 2022. The meeting was presided over by the Chairperson of NEC, Dr Mohamed Soliman.

The Director General (DG) of AfricaRice, Dr Harold Roy-Macauley, called the meeting to order at about 12h00 and welcomed all participants, including NEC members and invited guests as observers to the meeting. He reminded NEC of their important role as advisory body to the COM, which includes the reviewal all key strategic and statutory documents and request for endorsement and formulation of recommendations to be approved by COM.

The Chairperson of NEC, Dr Mohamed Soliman, in his opening remarks expressed gratitude to the NEC members and invited guests for their availability to participate in the NEC meeting. He informed members that NEC was only able to organize one in-person meeting in Cairo in September 2019. Several other meetings organized in 2020 and 2021 were done virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Major issues addressed included the AfricaRice-IRRI merger and the One CGIAR transition process. A resolution, which was passed after a no objection vote, by the COM in September 2021, led to the adherence of AfricaRice to One CGIAR. Efforts to work with the One CGIAR to align their governance and operational instruments resulted in proposed amendments to the AfricaRice Constitution. He informed NEC about the establishment of an AfricaRice-led Rice Research and Innovation Strategy for Africa following the end of the 2011 – 2020 AfricaRice Strategic plan. He further informed the NEC members and invited guests that most of the issues NEC had been examining during the various virtually meeting have been developed into documents which have been shared with members. He called on NEC to critically examine the documents to facilitate discussions during this meeting. Finally, the NEC Chair expressed gratitude to the DG of AfricaRice, the Secretary of the Council, for his invaluable support to the Association and declared the meeting open.

2. Quorum

Quorum was attained for the meeting with the presence and participation of twenty (20) DG of NARIs from member countries. The absence of eight NEC members countries was registered.

3. Rapporteurs Dr Demba B. Jallow

The DG of FOFIFA, Madagascar, Dr. Lala Razafinjara, and that of the Gambia Dr Demba Jallow, served as rapporteurs to the meeting.

4. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was considered and adopted as presented.

5. Presentation of dossier to NEC for examination

The following dossiers were presented to NEC by the Director General and Chief of Staff, for examination:

- (i) The biennial report of the Director General of AfricaRice
- (ii) The proposed amendments to the AfricaRice Constitution in lieu of its alignment to the governance framework of One CGIAR
- (iii) The new 2030 Rice Research and Innovation strategy for Africa
- (iv) The justification for the initiation of the development of an innovative financing mechanism that would contribute to the sustainable operations of AfricaRice.
- (v) The expression of interest by the Director General of FOFIFA of Madagascar for the Chairmanship of the Association for the coming two years.

6. Outcome on review of dossiers presented to NEC

The NEC commended the AfricaRice Secretariat for the relevance and quality of the dossiers presented for examination to the NEC.

Key concerns, comments and observations raised by the NEC included, notably the lack of detailed and progressive delivery of knowledge and innovations between 2018 and 2022 in the form of planned activities, the low level of payment of annual contributions and arrears by member states, the diminished support provided by AfricaRice to institutions especially those in Central and Southern Africa, the 2/3 majority vote of One CGIAR System Board Members over that of Board members representative of member states and the unclear roles and benefits of AfricaRice, NARIs and other stakeholders in the establishment of the proposed innovative financing mechanism around rice seed capital.

The AfricaRice Management thanked the NEC for the critical examination of the dossiers. It reassured NEC that all comments made will be taken onboard moving forward. The DG reminded NEC, however, that despite Management's effort made in implementing the resolutions passed by the 31st COM to raise the level of payment of annual contributions and arrears, this has not succeeded. Management remarked that since AfricaRice is an Association of member states, the various categories of institutions and especially the National Agricultural Research Institutions,

which are the entry points in countries, should act as Ambassadors of the Association to the governments of member states to create more visibility and facilitate payment of these dues.

7. Endorsements and Recommendations

Endorsements - In the light of commendations and key concerns raised by the NEC and the adequate response/clarification provided by Management on the dossiers examined, the NEC is recommending the following endorsements by the COM:

- (v) The proposed amendments to the Constitution and that AfricaRice Management ensures that the revised Constitution is signed by all member countries through electronic means.
- (vi) The elements of the New 2030 Rice Research and Innovation Strategy for Africa and that the Board and Management proceed to finalizing and publishing the new Strategy within a reasonable timeframe.
- (vii) The request from Management to initiate the establishment of an innovative financing mechanism to maximize the financial resources of AfricaRice and contribute to the sustainable operations of the Institution, based on a public private partnership and market-led financial transaction of rice knowledge and products delivered by research, and especially rice seeds and that AfricaRice takes the lead in this and works with its partner national agricultural research institutions and other relevant partners including the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) to establish the most appropriate mechanism.
- (viii) The Choice of Madagascar as member country Chairing the Council of Ministers of the Association for the next two years.

Recommendations - NEC is requesting COM to consider the following recommendations for translation into resolutions:

- 1. Member countries should endeavor to step up the payment of their annual contributions in a timely manner and pay all their arrears by the end of 2023**
- 2. The Directors General of NARIs, in partnership with AfricaRice, should establish a plan for stepping up the visibility of AfricaRice as well as its research deliverables to governments of members states.**
- 3. AfricaRice, Member Countries, and development banks such as AfDB should exploit ways and means of sourcing the one-off payment of arrears of annual contribution from rice value chain projects, where possible.**
- 4. AfricaRice should engage in strategic partnerships with the private sector to raise additional funds for sustaining the operations of the Center.**
- 5. AfricaRice should support member countries in using strategic information derived from the Continental Investment Plan for Accelerating Rice Self Sufficiency in Africa (CIPriSSA) established for 11 countries**

with support from AfricaRice, to advocate for investments that would lead to increased performance of rice value chains and the attainment of rice self-sufficiency in Africa.

6. AfricaRice should strengthen and consolidate its links with national agricultural research institutions as well as sub-regional research and innovation institutions in Central and Southern Africa in a bid to strengthen their capacity in rice research and development.
7. The Board of Trustees and Management of AfricaRice should pursue their work with One CGIAR without compromising the tenets of the Constitution and disrupting the privileges the Association benefits from its host countries.
8. One CGIAR should provide all the support necessary in its partnership with AfricaRice that will result in strengthening the capacity of the Center to deliver on the mission accorded to it by its 28 member countries of strengthening the rice sector in Africa.
9. Any other business

NEC members were reminded to ensure the confirmation of the participation of their ministers in the 32nd ordinary session of the COM that will take place on Thursday 31st March 2022. For the ministers that would not be physically present, the DGs should confirm the representative of the Ministers.

10. Closing remarks of the Chair of NEC

The Chair of NEC, in closing the meeting, thanked the NEC for their active participation in establishing the draft recommendations that would be considered by the 32nd COM. He called upon the rapporteurs and the Secretariat of the Association to finalize the recommendations in readiness for the 32nd COM meeting scheduled for March 31, 2022. He then expressed his gratitude to all for the excellent support provided to him during his tenure as Chair of NEC. He recognized the Association's achievements during the last four years, which were crowned with laurels in the form of various awards and expressed gladness to be part of the successes of the Association.

He reiterated the gratitude of NEC to the DG of AfricaRice and his staff for effectively holding the reigns of the Center during his tenure and requested, as the baton is passed on to another country, the requested support to his successor to enable the Association to continue its trajectory towards facilitating the attainment of rice self-sufficiency on the continent. He thanked all his peers for participating in this successful NEC meeting, and wished the Association continued success, and then closed the meeting.

END