



RAFII

Rural
Advancement
Foundation
International

ANNUAL REPORT 1991/92

*Working with the part of biodiversity
that nurtures people
and with the people
who have nurtured biodiversity
for ten thousand years
— farmers and rural communities.*

RAFII (the Rural Advancement Foundation International) is an international non-governmental organization with headquarters in Ottawa, Canada, and is governed by an 13-member Board of Trustees. RAFII is concerned about long-term human food security, and particularly about the plant genetic resources that nurture human life.

For 15 years, RAFII has worked with farmers' organizations, other rural NGOs, and concerned citizens worldwide to promote sustainable agriculture and to confront the conditions, policies and practices that threaten global food security.

RAFII is particularly alarmed that genetic diversity is being lost in the world's major staple

food crops. Modern agriculture, with its massive introduction of uniform seeds (especially the high response varieties of the green revolution), has led to genetic erosion — a dramatic decrease in the genetic diversity of food crops, especially in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, where most of the world's staple foods originated, and where their genetic diversity is greatest.

This report will summarize RAFII's activities for the year ended 31 August 1992. It will also provide a retrospective of 15 years of RAFII's work.

RAFI

Rural Advancement Foundation International



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am delighted to offer you this Annual Report for RAFI for the fiscal year ending 31 August, 1992. I hope that you will read it carefully, share it with colleagues, and join with me in admiration for the accomplishments of this remarkable voluntary organization.

RAFI is, in many ways, unique. Within these pages, you will find a highly-abbreviated account of RAFI's main activities since its inception. It has been 15 years since a small band of international agricultural advocates and researchers gathered in the winter of 1977 in Saskatchewan, Canada to discuss "seeds".

Since that historic meeting, RAFI has brought the question of declining crop genetic diversity to the world's attention. Under RAFI's intensive efforts, and together with sister NGOs, this obscure scientific concern became a central issue in the international agricultural research and development community.

In the 1970s, RAFI warned that the green revolution and commercial seed varieties were leading to massive erosion of the world's genetic stock for food crops. This led in time to the creation of new UN organs and legal instruments to conserve genetic diversity, and was most recently reflected in the Earth Summit's Biodiversity Treaty and Agenda 21.

As RAFI evolved, "seeds" became "plant genetic resources", and RAFI cast its attention more widely to include all agricultural diversity. It began to sound an alarm about the potential impact of new biotechnologies which threaten to change world agriculture at least as dramatically as the green revolution had done.

RAFI's focus and activities enlarged, but its purpose remained constant. The campaigners that forced governments and industry to look at the politics of genetic resources in the 1970s and early 1980s continue to address agricultural policy matters. They have also shown their ability to be diplomats and negotiators.

During 1992, I heard RAFI variously described as the "court jester" of the global agricultural research system, and as the "iron butterfly" of sustainable agriculture and biodiversity, "moving between the grassroots and the rarified upper-atmosphere of UN negotiations".

RAFI's research - exemplified this year by the excellent communiques on pyrethrum and potatoes prepared by Hope Shand - has earned it considerable respect.

RAFI's analysis has also been widely sought - by NGOs, governments and multilateral bodies - on the implications and choices involved in the UNCED negotiations, and on the future role of international agricultural institutions. Perhaps most of all, RAFI has won respect and admiration for its often-unorthodox creativity in bringing new ideas, perspectives and strategies to world attention.

The surprise for many readers will be that the RAFI they have known for fifteen years soared to a complement of six persons this year.

But the more RAFI changes, the more it stays the same. Of the little crew that first met in 1977 - each from a different organization, several now work as RAFI staff. Ken Shipley became RAFI's Director of Operations in 1992. Jean Christie joined us to work on the biopoly

agenda, based temporarily in Australia. Hope Shand, though not at that first meeting, joined RAFI only months later, to work with Cary Fowler in RAFI-USA. She developed RAFI's focus on biotechnology from a vantage-point overlooking North Carolina's Research Triangle Park, and returned this year from study to continue that work. Cary now works with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, directing preparations for what we think of as the "Seeds of the Earth Summit" in 1995. Pat Mooney, who organized the 1977 meeting, commutes between Manitoba and the RAFI headquarters in Ottawa, as Executive Director. Bev Cross completed ten years with RAFI as office manager, researcher, and traffic director in Ottawa, and Kathy Zaumseil completed five years of research and administration with RAFI-USA.

This annual report commemorates not only a 15th anniversary for RAFI, but also a first. As many of our friends well know, RAFI has never stood much on ceremony. We have never before published an annual report. Although RAFI began work in 1977, it was not legally incorporated until 1985. Until 1990, RAFI activities and finances were managed by the US-based National Sharecroppers' Fund/Rural Advancement Fund. Following a restructuring, RAFI opened an international office in Ottawa. We are especially grateful to the Canadian International Development Agency for funding the establishment of the Ottawa office.

With the recently-changed structure, RAFI's Board took steps to institutionalize development's "iron butterfly", and strengthen its own role. Always active, if sometimes free-wheeling, the Board formalized its Executive and Program Committees and added three strong new members in 1992. Erskine Childers, formerly a senior official in the UN Secretariat; Ambassador Amir Jamal of Tanzania, spiritual leader of The South Centre in Geneva; and Ursula Schulz-Dornburg, NGO campaigner from Germany, all agreed to join RAFI's Board after years of support to RAFI in other fora.

The Board also recognized Pat Mooney's place in the organization by formalizing his title of Executive Director.

RAFI has always been a pioneer in taking on issues such as genetic resources conservation, biotechnology, and intellectual property concerns long before they become well known and popular. This is not likely to change.

I am confident that RAFI will continue to be the challenging campaigner it has always been. I am also confident that the institutional steps we have taken in 1992 will make it a still more formidable "butterfly" in the years ahead.

Sven Hamrell

President
Board of Trustees

RAFI – 15 years of achievement



In the late 1970s, RAFI

- first brought the loss of Third World genetic diversity to public attention at an international meeting in Canada;
- published the "Graham Centre Seed Directory", calling attention to corporate concentration in the seed industry as a threat to agricultural diversity, and providing a list of traditional seed companies in the USA, Canada and the UK;
- published *Seeds of the Earth* in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian and Japanese;
- made presentations at the UN Conference on Science & Technology for Development in Vienna, and to FAO in Rome.

In the 1980s, RAFI

- raised concerns about genetic erosion through campaigns and speaking tours in 46 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and Australia;
- cooperated with Third World delegates at UNCTAD in Geneva;
- published with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation "The Law of the Seed", which addressed the loss of genetic resources and broadened the debate to include biotechnology;
- with Third World governments and other NGOs, successfully encouraged FAO to adopt The International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources;
- encouraged FAO to establish the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources;
- was incorporated in the Netherlands with an international Board of Trustees;
- edited the first "Advance Technology Alert System Bulletin" for UNCSTD;
- undertook a global tour to raise awareness of FAO's Commission on Plant Genetic Resources, which more than 100 countries joined;
- received The Right Livelihood Award in the parliament of Sweden;
- published "The Community Seed Bank Kit" in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, to help Third World NGOs establish community-based genetic conservation programs;
- began research on biotechnology and genetic resources, and published the first of 27 (to date) "RAFI Communiques" for circulation worldwide;
- lobbied for the adoption of Farmer's Rights by the FAO Commission, and called for an International Fund for Plant Genetic Resources;
- negotiated the first formal contributions to the Genetic Resources Fund from various US foundations;
- with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, convened the first international conference on socioeconomic and environmental impacts of emerging biotechnologies, which produced "The Bogève Declaration";

- held a seminar for Third World delegations to the UN on biotechnology and biological diversity;
- did a survey of seed conservation in Africa, and with the Plant Genetic Resources Centre of Ethiopia, held a workshop for farmers, NGOs, scientists and government officials on genetic resources and biotechnology;
- similar workshops and surveys were conducted in Asia and Latin America;
- the Latin America workshop proposed an "Ethical Code of Conduct for Plant Collectors" and a "Code of Conduct on Biotechnology";
- with Third World NGOs proposed both codes of conduct to FAO for adoption. The code for plant collectors has been adopted. The code on biotechnology is still pending;
- with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, published "The Laws of Life", a comprehensive examination of the socioeconomic and environmental impact of new biotechnologies on the Third World;
- organized a consortium of Canadian NGOs to support a 3-year, \$1.3 million programme for genetic conservation in Africa;
- participated in the Keystone International Dialogue on Plant Genetic Resources, an off-the-record negotiation between governments, NGOs, and industry. Invited to join the Steering Committee for the Keystone Dialogue to review the Dialogue;
- supported ENDA Zimbabwe in the first SADCC (Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference) conference on biotechnology and genetic resources;
- at a roundtable of African scientists in Kenya, introduced for the first time, the concept of the Informal Innovation System, which appeared in Agenda 21, an environmental and development strategy for the next century;
- supported the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in its first Nordic Symposium on Biotechnology at which governments discussed the impact of biotechnology on the Third World;
- at the Ethiopian Gene Bank, held a first-of-its-kind, Africa-wide workshop for African NGOs of policy and practical aspects of plant genetic resource conservation.

In the 1990s, RAFI

- was invited by the United States Department of Agriculture to facilitate meetings between the US Government and FAO to allow the USA to join the FAO Commission and Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources. Outcomes: acceptance by FAO and USA of concept of quid pro quo between breeders' stocks and Third World un-commercialized genetic stocks; de-linking of new gene fund and germplasm access; and a proposal for a fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources. Proposal later introduced into Fourth Session of the FAO Commission;
- published *Shattering: Food, Politics, and the*

- Loss of Genetic Diversity* (British title: *The Threatened Gene*): Since published in German, with Italian edition pending;
- published "The Seed Map", later used in a kit for Canadian schools;
- RAFI Board member, Melaku Worede named as Chair of FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources;
- concluded the Keystone Dialogue through participation in second plenary, and was sole NGO participant in intergovernmental negotiations held in Stockholm on the Keystone proposals. Proposals endorsed by key UNCED negotiators present; participated in concluding Keystone sessions on intellectual property (Rome), institutional reform (Uppsala), and the closing plenary in Oslo. Achieved agreement on a "Global Initiative on Plant Genetic Resources", including a \$300 million annual fund;
- participated with SEARICE, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, government representatives, and other NGOs in a Bangkok seminar on genetic resources policy and conservation;
- in Africa, assisted governments in a review of national legislation relating to living materials, briefed governments on issue;
- with Inter Pares, organized first-ever Lusophone workshop on genetic resources for Portuguese speaking African NGOs and governments;
- received the Judges World Hunger Year Book Award for *Shattering*;
- with CLADES, attended UNCTAD VIII in Colombia regarding economic and aid aspects of biodiversity; discussed UNCED with Third World trade and development ministers; proposed language on Farmers' Rights and Informal Innovation Systems adopted by UNCED PrepCom in New York; in preparation for UNCED briefed government and NGO delegations; assisted in preparing document presented at UNCED by Sweden; supplied briefing papers to NGOs attending UNCED;
- invited to address CIMMYT in Mexico, and ICLARM and IIRI in the Philippines; agreed with CGIAR to hold regional dialogues between NGOs and IARCs in Africa, Asia and Latin America; addressed IBPGR staff and discussed joint programming on the conservation of genetic resources; participated in ICLARM conference on aquatic genetic resources (Manila);
- established office in Queensland, Australia;
- developed concept of Biotechnology Early Response System for impacts of high technology on Third World farmers;
- during the Keystone Dialogue, the UNCED process, and at FAO, promoted the importance of indigenous knowledge in plant breeding and conservation of seed stocks;
- promoted South-South collaboration through training of SEARICE personnel in Addis Ababa.

RURAL ADVANCEMENT FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT AUGUST 31, 1992

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash	\$ 6,939
Subsidy receivable – Canadian International Development Agency	10,000
Accounts receivable	13,814
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	30,753

FIXED ASSETS (note 3)

2

\$30,755

LIABILITIES AND SURPLUS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts payable	\$17,312
Deferred subsidy – SAREC	8,129
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	25,441

SURPLUS

5,314

\$30,755

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

RURAL ADVANCEMENT FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

REVENUE AND EXPENSES
FOR THE INITIAL YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 1992

	Administration	CGIAR Liaison	Seeds of Survival	Plant Genetic Resource	Bio Technology	Bio Action	IARC Education	Total
REVENUE								
Subsidies (note 4)	\$91,721	41,712	27,370	11,260	29,888	4,392	33,939	240,282
Other	5,314	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,314
	97,035	41,712	27,370	11,260	29,888	4,392	33,939	245,596
EXPENSES								
Salaries and employee benefits	22,543	17,547	24,500	-	23,758	-	21,500	109,848
Rent	10,305	-	-	-	683	-	-	10,988
Travel expenses	5,855	22,889	-	10,424	3,658	4,286	11,813	58,925
Office expenses	8,080	244	1,826	-	605	-	-	10,755
Telecommunication	12,035	1,032	1,044	836	1,093	106	626	16,772
Postage	981	-	-	-	-	-	-	981
Accounting	4,880	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,880
Professional fees	1,035	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,035
Meetings	14,510	-	-	-	25	-	-	14,535
Advertising and promotion	613	-	-	-	-	-	-	613
Write-off of fixed assets	10,036	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,036
Interest and bank charges	848	-	-	-	66	-	-	914
	91,721	41,712	27,370	11,260	29,888	4,392	33,939	240,282
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ 5,314	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,314

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

RURAL ADVANCEMENT FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT AUGUST 31, 1992

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ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD
