SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. The primary objective of the eco-regional concept, that is to achieve sustainable improvement in agricultural productivity, was broadly endorsed.

2. New initiatives should not necessarily cover entire eco-regions as defined by TAC. Rather, they should focus on production systems of regional significance that are at risk of degrading the resource base of which offer opportunities for enhanced productivity.

3. New initiatives require forging dynamic and complementary partnerships between NARS, IARCs, regional institutions, universities in both the North and South, and NGOs; that is, all relevant research institutions in the broader global system who can significantly contribute to and benefit from participation.

4. The eco-regional approach can not be a means through which the IARCs would attempt to expand their mandates or influence over other institutions. Rather it is a means through which greater lead responsibilities in research can be systematically devolved to strengthen NARS and transnational institutions over time.

5. The major challenge is to forge partnerships among institutions with often vastly unequal resources. Equal roles, however, should be shared in priority setting, planning and monitoring of eco-regional activities. An essential component is the mobilization of additional resources to enable NARS to participate fully within an appropriate division of labor.

6. The new collaborative mechanisms should not be seen to replace or substitute for existing initiatives, such as SPAAR, which are already in place. More consideration needs to be given to how eco-regional approaches can complement and strengthen successful mechanisms.
7. Many components of the eco-regional approach are not new. It is important to fully utilize the accumulated experience in the methods and results of past natural resources management research. Similar lessons need to be derived from collaborative mechanisms employed in the past.

8. ISNAR is well placed to assist in a review of past collaborative mechanisms, and to assist in new regional priority setting exercises.

9. The consortium mechanism needs to be designed in such a way that is easily managed and does not create and additional and unnecessary administrative burden. Greater clarity is needed in organizational and procedural detail.

10. There is no uniform organizational formula which is appropriate for eco-regional in all circumstances. What is required is a flexible application of the principles outlined in the Working Group report.

11. There is a need to re-examine the long-term mandates and structures of CG Centers within the ecoregional concept. There is also a need for improved cooperation between CG Centers to rationalize contacts with NARS and to avoid overburdening NARS.

12. Projects developed within the eco-regional concept need to set clear measures for success and to build in on-going mechanisms to evaluate institutional and research impact.

13. There is an urgent need to institutionalize on-going consultation between NARS, and to re-examine and strengthen consultation between NARS and the CGIAR in order to permit them to contribute in the formulation of CGIAR policies from the beginning.

14. Donors present expressed commitment to provide support to new initiatives if partnership principles are fully respected. They also indicated that new sources of funding could probably be identified for new initiatives in natural resources management research if driven by the partnership principles.

15. NARS directors agreed to meet in September 1993 for further deliberations.
TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON AN ECO-REGIONAL APPROACH TO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
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