

**CENTER DIRECTOR'S COMMITTEE
NOTE ON GENDER IN AGRICULTURE**

15 March 1999

The 1998 CGIAR System Review made a recommendation regarding women in agriculture:

“The CGIAR organize an International Network for the Technological Empowerment of Women in Agriculture. The network should promote a common platform for action at the country level by national, bilateral, international, non-governmental, private-sector and women’s organizations” (Recommendation # 9).

The Centre Directors Committee presented its response to the CGIAR Consultative Council in Brussels, 28 January 1999. The CDC responded that it did not support the establishment of an additional network, based on the belief that the combination of the CGIAR Systemwide Program on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (PRGA) and the CGIAR Gender and Diversity Program provides a comprehensive platform to address gender staffing and gender analysis issues.

This paper describes current status and action plans of the gender analysis (research) and gender staffing (human resources policy) capacity of the CGIAR.

The Difference between Gender Staffing and Gender Analysis

Gender Staffing and Gender Analysis are two distinct areas of endeavor. Gender Staffing efforts aim to strengthen the recruitment and retention of highly qualified women professionals and to create work environments that are equally supportive of the productivity, advancement, and job satisfaction of women and men.

Gender Analysis is a research methodology that enables research scientists to take into account the special needs, constraints and responsibilities of women in technology development. Use of gender analysis as a research tool is basic to technology development aimed at poverty alleviation and the empowerment of poor rural women through their participation as users in the process of technology development. Household food security, particularly among children in poor countries, is vitally affected as women make up an increasing proportion of the rural poor (the “feminization of poverty”).

Poor rural women's participation in the early stages of technology design ensures that new technologies are appropriate to their needs and can be adopted rapidly.

Gender Staffing in the CGIAR

The CGIAR has had a Gender Staffing Program since 1991. Recently, key stakeholders agreed to broaden the Program to include other dimensions of diversity in identity groups, such as race and ethnicity. The new Program will begin in June 1999.

Current Status. The current Gender Staffing Program supports efforts of the CGIAR centers and their boards to strengthen the recruitment and retention of highly qualified women scientists and professionals and to create work environments that are equally supportive of the productivity, advancement, and job satisfaction of women and men. A gender equitable work environment is defined as one that:

- includes and supports both men and women;
- stimulates their fullest productivity and satisfaction in their professional and personal lives;
- harnesses men's and women's diverse skills, perspectives and knowledge
- values diverse contributions and ways of working.

To support the centers, the Program provides information, funds, technical advice, consultancies, and training. The Program focuses on five areas: recruitment, spouse employment, leadership and management development, gender issues in the workplace, and information dissemination. The Program also serves the members (donors) of the CGIAR by providing information to increase understanding of gender issues and their relevance for organizational performance, monitoring and reporting on changes within the centers, and channeling funds to key leverage points for change.

Members of the CGIAR have advocated greater attention to gender staffing for reasons of both equity and organizational effectiveness. First, they recognized the historically low participation of women as compared to men in the centers. Women represented only 11% of all internationally recruited staff across all centers in 1991. Yet, both the numbers and percentages of women in the disciplines relevant to the centers have increased dramatically in recent years. To ensure high quality staff, it was recognized that the centers needed to tap effectively into this expanding pool of talent.

Second, the centers are increasingly engaged in partnerships with a wide range of organizations, including non-governmental organizations and local organizations where women's participation is often high. Gender diversity was seen as a potential asset in fostering these partnerships. Third, many donors saw cultural and gender diversity in staffing as an asset that can strengthen organizational performance by broadening the pool of skills, talents, perspectives, and ideas within the centers. And finally, given the humanitarian mandate of the CGIAR, its concern for equity, and its international character, it was thought that the centers should provide leadership in creating work environments that are gender equitable and culturally pluralistic.

The CGIAR Gender Staffing Program has supported the centers in five areas: recruitment, spouse employment, leadership and management development, gender issues in the workplace, and information dissemination. The Program began with a diagnosis of gender staffing issues in the centers and awareness-raising workshops for senior managers. The Program subsequently developed resource materials, services and policy guidelines for system-wide use, as well as undertaking pilot projects with individual centers on specific topics, such as improved recruitment practices, spouse employment options, sexual harassment policy and gender in the workplace.

Annual funding for the Program has ranged from \$200-240,000 per year, with core staffing of a 2/3 time Program Leader and a 1/3 time Program Assistant, and six to eight consultants. The Program is coordinated by the CGIAR Secretariat and is implemented by the Center for Gender in Organizations at the Simmons Graduate School of Management. An Advisory Panel of six senior managers from the centers, as well as the senior management specialist in the CGIAR Secretariat, have guided the Program on priorities and monitored program delivery. The Program has been linked directly to the centers through a network of Gender Staffing Focal Points—managers or senior staff in each center responsible for providing leadership within the centers in addressing gender-staffing issues.

Significant progress has been made since 1991. The number of female internationally recruited staff increased by more than 20 percent, and female nationally- recruited professional staff by 150 percent. However, the proportional representation of women in professional and scientific categories (16%) is still well below the 25-30 percent level of estimated supply and the 35 percent level that research suggests is necessary for a minority group to have a significant voice and influence in shaping the work and work environment of an organization. The centers have also begun to systematically incorporate the knowledge, tools, and strategies for creating a gender-equitable environment into the fabric of their policies, management systems, and work practices.

Feedback from the centers in 1998 indicates that the Program has been highly appreciated. Over the past six years, it has provided services to all centers. It has given intensive support for consultancies, technical assistance, action research, or small grants to 10 centers. The remaining six centers have benefited from system-wide products, such as guideline papers and the newsletter and in terms of support for recruitment searches or subsidized opportunities for management training.

To review the CG system's experience and to make strategic decisions about future initiatives to address gender-staffing issues, an Inter-Center Consultation was held with ISNAR in The Hague in April 1998. Twenty-five managers and scientists from across the system, as well as four distinguished resource persons with recognized expertise in gender and staff diversity, participated in the Consultation. Each center representative came to the Consultation having carried out extensive discussions with staff and managers in their centers about priorities for future work on gender and broader staff diversity issues. The Inter-Center Consultation concluded that good progress had been made on identifying best practices for formal policies and

management systems, but recognized that adoption and implementation remain quite variable across the centers. More learning and work need to be done on organizational culture and informal practices. Leadership and management commitment to creating work environments supportive of gender diverse staff need to be revitalized. Continued investment needs to be made in strengthening the skills and knowledge of the internal change agents – both managers and staff—responsible for guiding and promoting effective organizational change.

There is also now strong support among the centers to extend work on organizational change beyond gender, to other diverse identity groups within the centers, among both nationally and internationally recruited staff. The centers believe that the more diverse staff composition and more intensive reliance on collaborative partnerships expected in the next century calls for new skills and approaches, to manage—and benefit—from this diversity. To deliver a dynamic, effective and efficient program of research and outreach, the centers will need to value and integrate into the core work of the organization the varied perspectives, experiences and approaches that members of different identity groups bring to the work place.

Action Plan. The unanimous consensus of the Consultation was that the next phase of work should continue to consolidate and develop the work on gender, but also broaden the scope incrementally to include other aspects of staff diversity, such as culture, race and ethnicity, among both nationally and internationally recruited staff. The group also recommended unequivocally that a central program should be maintained to support center efforts, with the centers themselves taking a greater role in shaping and guiding the Program. The Consultation also generated the goal, strategies, and priorities for future work. From the centers' perspective, the clear aim of this next phase of work is to institutionalize the leadership, skills and knowledge, management tools and processes, and internal capacities to ensure that they can effectively manage staff diversity and harness its full benefits for achievement of their missions within the next five years.

The key elements of the strategy for future work on gender and staff diversity recommended by the Inter-Center Consultation are strongly supported by the centers and were endorsed by all key stakeholders within the CGIAR -- members, the Center Directors Committee, the Committee of Board Chairs, and Center Deputy Directors Committee at ICW 1999. An Advisory Board for the new Program has been established with representatives from all the major constituencies, including the NARS. A funding proposal has been developed for the new Program and half of the required funding has been secured, including a \$200,000 contribution from the Center Directors Committee.

A new Program Leader is currently being recruited. The new Program is expected to be launched in June 1999. Stakeholders strongly felt that the Program base should move from Washington to a Center located in the developing world, and the first decision of the new Advisory Board was, through a competitive bidding process, to select ICRAF headquarters in Nairobi as the new base. The next phase of work builds directly on the objectives, priorities, strategies, and activities developed by representatives from the centers at the Inter-Center Consultation. It, thus, reflects the centers' commitment to continue to work actively on gender staffing and broader diversity issues, their desire to continue to receive conceptual and technical

assistance and services from a central Program, and the activities that they believe will be most important to institutionalizing enhanced knowledge and skills for managing staff diversity to improve organizational performance in the future.

Gender Analysis in the CGIAR

The PRGA systemwide Program mainstreams gender analysis and participation of stakeholders, in particular poor rural women, into core research areas of the CGIAR – plant breeding, crop improvement and natural resource management research, through:

- Research to bring together the best empirical evidence on the impact of using gender analysis in technology development and institutional innovation, and to develop gender-sensitive guides for implementing effective stakeholder participation in research
- Capacity building to increase knowledge and skill for using gender analysis and stakeholder participation in research, based on practical learning experiences in ongoing research projects
- Information dissemination to increase awareness among senior and middle management of IARCs and NARS, donors, scientists and partners in development-oriented institutions of the impact of gender analysis and the institutional support needed for mainstreaming its use.

Current Status. Gender Analysis is a research methodology that enables scientists to differentiate the special needs, constraints, responsibilities and rights of women in agriculture from those of other stakeholders, and the impact of technical change on women. Use of gender analysis and the involvement of women as well as men is basic to technology development and institutional innovation intended to benefit rural women and the poor. Gender analysis, together with the analysis of other differentiating characteristics within and among stakeholders in an innovation, can help insure that technologies are useful and used.

It is more effective to integrate than to isolate gender analysis as a research approach. Therefore, gender analysis is a central component in the Program's research, capacity-building and partnership development activities.

Gender analysis alone is not sufficient. Analyzing differences in demand or preference among stakeholder groups, and then involving them in research and development (R&D) is a key to successful innovation. Once the extent to which women and/or men are known to have a stake in new technologies or management strategies, they must be appropriately involved in R&D process. For this reason, the PRGA program links gender analysis to the effective involvement of diverse groups of stakeholders in the process of technology development and institutional innovation.

- The PRGA Program focuses on mainstreaming gender/stakeholder analysis principles, methods and tools in the core research areas of the CGIAR --plant breeding and natural resource management-- so that their use will become an integral part of research within the CGIAR System.

- The Small Grant Program in participatory plant breeding (PPB) and participatory approaches to natural resource management research (NRM) gives special attention to integrating the use of gender analysis into the research process and to involving diverse groups of stakeholders in carrying out research.
- The Program's capacity-building is designed to build the skills and to install partnership principles needed to integrate gender / stakeholder analysis and participation in research
- The Program's information dissemination and public awareness activities make the needs of men and women innovators and users of technology visible.
- The Program develops criteria with which to assess the extent to which gender analysis and user involvement in the research process has been achieved and what impact it has had.
- The Program places a priority on the development of technologies and institutional innovations that benefit and empower rural women

Action Plan

Review achievements to date. A review of the PRGA Program's achievements in the CGIAR, undertaken by H. Feldstein, was started in 1997 and will be available in March, 1999. At the same time the achievements by other institutions such as UNIFEM and the International Technology Development Group (ITDG) to empower women through agricultural technology are being summarized. Specific attention is being paid to:

- Sources of information on technology that has already been developed by women and/or for use by women;
- Changes in women's responsibilities that this technology covers (e.g.. land preparation, planting, weeding, pest & disease control, post harvest-storage)
- Research in progress specifically to develop agricultural technology for women or by women
- Gaps in technology design or supply specifically for women

As sources of information are identified or documents prepared, these will be posted on the PRGA Website. Annual reports and further information on PRGA Program partnerships and activities may be found at <http://www.prgaprogram.org/>.

Identify and analyse women's changing demand for agricultural technology. A dynamic assessment of changing needs of women to provide regular feedback to technology design in CG and NARS is required. This will be addressed through a network of rural women's focus groups, some of which will be associated with the Program's Small Grant Program; commissioned papers; and workshops to synthesize input from focus groups and interpret main trends, the first of which has been designed by IRRI.

Promote empowerment of rural women through participation in technology development and information exchange. This is integral to the PRGA Program's work in progress. Specific additional actions needed to strengthen this program and promote further the empowerment of women are proposed in the concept note available from CIAT.

**TAC Comment on CDC Paper on
Women in Agriculture**
(SRP Recommendation 9)

TAC strongly supports the spirit of the System Review Panel's Recommendation 9 (R9) to strengthen efforts towards the empowerment of women in agriculture. Given the priority concern for poverty alleviation, TAC attaches particular importance to the identification of specially disadvantaged groups in rural communities, and to attention to their specific needs.

The CDC paper 'Gender in Agriculture', designed to address R9, has two major components. The first describes the CGIAR Gender and Diversity Programme. This is mainly concerned with staffing issues within the System and, in TAC's view is not directly relevant to the concern expressed by the System Review Panel. The second component describes the Systemwide Programme on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (PRGA), centred at CIAT, which does already have considerable experience in methods of empowering rural women through participation in technology design and information exchange. The Programme has recently been submitted to an internally commissioned external review, carried out by an international authority on the topic, but the results were not available at the time of writing this commentary. In addition, the achievements of non-CGIAR institutions on the empowerment of women through agricultural technology are being summarised.

At TAC 76 (March 1999), CIAT made available to TAC the concept note mentioned in the CDC paper. It shows in more detail how it is proposed to strengthen the PRGA, in response to R9. In TAC's view, the activities described are a logical development of the PRGA's ongoing work and could potentially make a major contribution to fulfilling the need pointed out by the System Review.

TAC therefore invites CIAT to present the results of the PRGA review to the Committee, along with the summary of the related work of other institutions. At the same time, TAC encourages CIAT to develop fully the project proposal described in the concept note 'Technology Development for Empowering Women in Agriculture' for TAC's review and recommendation to the Group. TAC would then be in position to inform the Group whether additional measures are required to ensure that the concern expressed by R9 is adequately addressed.