CGIAR MID-TERM MEETING 1994

NEW DELHI

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS AND DECISIONS

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) held its Mid-Term Meeting from May 23-27, 1994 at the Ashok Hotel, New Delhi, India. Mr. Ismail Serageldin, Chairman, presided. A summary of proceedings and of the main decisions reached appears on the pages that follow. Verbatim transcripts of proceedings are on file at the CGIAR Information Center, Room J4-034, The World Bank.

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CGIAR MID-TERM MEETING, 1994

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS AND DECISIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) held its 1994 Mid-Term Meeting (MTM94) from May 23-27 in New Delhi. Mr. Ismail Serageldin, Chairman, CGIAR, presided.

The Hon. Prime Minister of India, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, formally inaugurated the meeting with an informative and inspiring address in which he stressed the importance of agriculture and the need for action both at the local and global level to nurture agricultural development.

He urged scientists to develop a micro-level planning model. He said "I would like you to think of the whole world, think of all the variety that God has given to this globe, and at the same time think of the need to find differentiated and properly considered prescriptions for each of those varieties rather than tarring everything with one kind of brush. That is not going to work in agriculture. Every plot of land is like a human being, it has to be tended like a child and that is what we, the farmers, think about our land."

The Prime Minister said it was appropriate that the meeting was being held in India, which was an early user and beneficiary of the international agricultural research system, as also a contributor to the strength of the system. The products of CGIAR-funded research, he pointed out, fuelled the green revolution which helped to feed and nurture millions. He dismissed the notion that the green revolution is responsible for inequity, and that green revolution crop varieties are inherently hostile to the environment.

Globally, he said, cooperation as spearheaded by the CGIAR was a positive approach to the complex issues relating to poverty alleviation and natural resources management that lie ahead.

Other speakers at the inauguration included the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Shri Balram Jakhar, CGIAR Chairman Ismail Serageldin and Prof. V. L. Chopra, Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research and a member of the CGIAR Oversight Committee.

The Mid-Term Meeting was held against a background of financial crisis caused by a significant decline of funding for CGIAR programs since 1992 in both real and nominal terms. The CGIAR faced the crisis by streamlining procedures, refocusing its agenda, reducing staff, and seeking to restructure the system by merging four centers into two. Some 110 senior international scientist positions and 2000 locally hired positions were dropped across the system. Consequently, there was little excess capacity to shed. The decline also highlighted serious weaknesses in the management structure of the CGIAR.

Shortly before the New Delhi meeting, Mr. Serageldin convened an ad hoc consultation (in Washington) to examine and assess strategic issues that would be at the forefront of the discussions in New Delhi. Participants reaffirmed the need for the CGIAR to be supported in a manner consistent with its
effectiveness as an instrument of development. They agreed that the CGIAR system needed strengthening, financial stability, and a research driven agenda. Accordingly, the MTM94 agenda provided opportunities for the CGIAR to be redefined as a dynamic institution, driven by the research needs of developing countries and the scientific capacity of the centers but conscious of financial realities.

At New Delhi, CGIAR members responded fully in all areas, acknowledging that urgent measures are required to stabilize the system's finances, reform its governance and operations, clarify the vision that guides its role and mandate, and renew international support for its mission. In doing so, the Group sent centers a clear message that the CGIAR system will be both renewed and preserved.

The Group's emphasis was on changes to the system's governance that would result in predictability, transparency and accountability. The Group adopted a plan of action and an 18-month time table to formulate and endorse details of the new strategy and principles, secure their ratification through a High-level Conference early in 1995, and ensure their implementation.

The time table, proposed by Mr. Serageldin in his opening address, follows:

- At the New Delhi Mid-Term Meeting of the CGIAR (May 1994), develop a shared vision among donors of how to build a more effective system that is funded in a predictable and sustainable fashion
- Follow-up on the consolidation and elaboration of the proposals adopted (Summer 1994)
- Formally adopt the proposals to be submitted to donor authorities for their consideration (International Centers Week, October 1994)
- Invite high-level participation at a special meeting to engage donors in setting future directions for the CGIAR (November 1994)
- High-level meeting (late January/early February 1995)
- Definition of needed changes and instruments (Spring 1995)
- Adopt the detailed changes and instruments (Mid-Term Meeting, May 1995)
- Action in capitals, and formal ratification if needed (Summer 1995)
- Final adoption of new structures, procedures and programs (International Centers Week, October 1995)

These changes would enable the renewed CGIAR to become effective by January 1996.

CHAIRMAN’S OPENING ADDRESS: STOCKTAKING -- WHERE ARE WE AND HOW DO WE PROCEED? 2

The meeting acclaimed Mr. Serageldin's opening address with a standing ovation, and endorsed the key thrusts of the strategy he proposed for revitalizing the CGIAR system:

- Agreement that the system's research agenda must drive the budget, not the other way around.
- Decisive efforts to stabilize the financial situation and halt erosion of the system's scientific capacity. These efforts include, primarily:
  a. an effort to mobilize additional resources for the system's approved core program so that, through a matching formula, the CGIAR can fully utilize the World Bank's offer of a one-time special grant of $20 million (additional to the customary annual grant) for 1994/1995. The
Bank's package is linked to a two pillar strategy: adoption of a reform plan by the Group, and availability of sufficient funds from other donors to be matched by the Bank in a ratio of 1:2. Donor contributions could either be "new" funding, or funds re-directed from activities not included in the core program approved at ICW93, and

b. a revision of funding strategies to focus future donor contributions on the agreed research agenda. This would require greater discipline by both centers and donors.

- Refocussing of the research agenda.
- Formulation and adoption of a fully shared and supported CGIAR vision statement.
- Reformation of governance and management to ensure predictability, transparency and accountability.
- Full integration of the perspectives of national agricultural research systems (NARS) in developing countries within the CGIAR policy framework. Establishment of a group to support the NARS in the Chairman's Vice-Presidency at the World Bank.
- Linkages of CGIAR programs with connected activities, including participatory programs at the farm level, especially women's groups and other NGOs.
- Agreement on a plan of action and 18-month time table to formulate and endorse details of the new strategies and principles, and secure their ratification at high levels of government through, for instance, an international conference early in 1995.

Thirty-five delegates took the floor to welcome the Chairman's proposals and commit themselves to supporting the proposed program of renewal. While endorsing the Chairman's proposals, the Group expressed its appreciation of the encouragement and support provided by the heads of the three cosponsoring agencies. Several references were made to the fact that a joint appeal for support to donors from World Bank President Lewis Preston, FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf, and UNDP Administrator Gustave Speth, had received positive responses, some with firm offers of additional funding.

Thanking CGIAR members for an overwhelming affirmation of support, Mr. Serageldin said he was honored by their trust and confidence. He pledged to work very hard with them to make the directions they had all been talking about, reality. He said he was gratified by the show of confidence in the CGIAR, by the positive response to the World Bank's offer of a "rescue operation," and by the very constructive position taken by the heads of the cosponsoring agencies and their representatives at the Mid-Term Meeting. He was particularly grateful, Mr. Serageldin said, that even at this early stage, several delegates were able to declare specific numbers by way of additional support.

Summing up the comments made from the floor, he said there was agreement for renewal on the basis of the principle that a research agenda that is particularly responsive to the needs of the poor should drive the budget, and it should not be the other way around. There was agreement, too, that the broad themes for and directions of renewal should be as outlined in his opening address; that CGIAR financing should be characterized by transparency, predictability and accountability; and that the process of renewal launched in New Delhi should follow the timetable adopted by the Group.
A CGIAR VISION

The need for a new CGIAR vision statement was first identified at and agreed on at the 1992 Mid-Term Meeting when the Group endorsed the view expressed by IRRI chairman Walter Falcon (who was the moderator at a pre-MTM consultation of stakeholders) that "the CGIAR system badly needs a new, crisp 15-page statement pointing the way to the future." A number of focal points within and outside the system addressed this task thereafter and several documents relating to the CGIAR vision were tabled for discussion at MTM94.

The centerpiece of the discussion was a report from the Vision Panel of the Oversight Committee. Other documents taken up were a report on the "CGIAR in the 21st Century" from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC); a report from the US-based Action Group on Food Security convened by Mr. Robert Blake, chairman of the Committee on Agricultural Sustainability for Developing Countries; a Progress Report on "Vision 2020," an international conference on food security planned by IFPRI; a review of Swedish support to the CGIAR; and a presentation by Mr. V. L. Chopra on the "Needs and Expectations of NARS."

At the outset of the discussion, Mr. Serageldin reminded the Group that they were not required to express a preference for one document over another. Each of the documents was important in its own right. The Group was called upon to reflect on the issues raised in all the documents and to consider the directions that have to be pursued. The documents should, therefore, be viewed as contributions to a brief, vision statement that would be presented for adoption at ICW94 and, thereafter, to an international group of high level decision makers early in 1995.

During the discussion, participants thanked the authors of all documents for important contributions to the crucial task of redefining the CGIAR vision as part of the broader renewal exercise. They thanked, as well, those who presented the reports to the Group at New Delhi for adding essential background and perspective which helped to bring clarity into the discussion.

The reports approached the role of the CGIAR, its niche in the global research system, and its potential for continued effectiveness as a catalyst of sustainable development, from different starting points. They agreed, however, on the vital importance of ensuring a continuity of research on problems of international significance in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and on the position of the CGIAR as a cornerstone of the global agricultural research system. Delegates felt that the diversity of approaches taken by the different reports was useful and interesting. Together, the documents constitute a set of useful building blocks that could be used to construct a concise vision statement.

The following major themes emerged from the Group’s consideration of the substance of the reports discussed.

CGIAR’s role and focus

Delegates reaffirmed the need for the CGIAR to take a global leadership role in setting an agenda for international research. In doing so, the CGIAR should take into account the fact that the system’s centers were established to conduct international research and the scarce resources of the system should, therefore, go mainly into supporting research. Strategic research whose results help to raise agricultural productivity in developing countries while ensuring proper management of the natural resource base on which productivity depends is the key objective of the CGIAR system. Both the rural and urban poor in those countries should be considered the ultimate beneficiaries of CGIAR-funded research. The system should be open-minded about cash crops and "orphan"
commodities, particularly in a farming systems context. The "public goods" nature of CGIAR products should be preserved.

**Rationale**

Several speakers felt that to argue merely on the basis of "more food" as the rationale for continued agricultural research was simplistic and unlikely to evoke support from the international community. The vision of the CGIAR is to contribute to the alleviation of poverty and the elimination or at least, in the short term, the reduction of hunger. The case that agriculture can be a catalyst of sustainable development with a multi-faceted impact on poverty, hunger, food security, and the environment had to be made in a convincing way. Agricultural research, as the foundation on which modern agriculture is built, had equally to be presented as an essential precondition of agricultural development and therefore a crucial component of sustainable development.

**Partnerships**

Broad support was expressed for the view that the CGIAR should position itself within the overall global research effort, recognizing the work of other actors in developing countries as well as the OECD. This would require greater emphasis and stronger pursuit of partnerships with NARS, NGOs, universities, and advanced research institutions. Consequently, the CGIAR should commit itself to becoming a more "open" and collaborative system. It would need, in the process, to clarify the system’s relations the private sector.

**NARS**

Participants reaffirmed the view that national research systems in developing countries are the primary partner of the CGIAR and re-emphasized the need for defining the NARS-CGIAR relationship with clarity. Several attempts at "getting it right" had failed in the past so there was all the more reason to ensure that a new vision statement should not be weak or vague on this point. In that context, delegates felt that none of the reports under review adequately addressed the present and future needs of NARS. The vision for the system should be intricately linked with and encompass a vision of the future of the NARS. However, other options should be explored for strengthening NARS, while CGIAR centers continue to play a bridging role between NARS and other institutions. This role will shift, in individual countries and in regions as NARS enhance their capacities.

**Shift to Programs**

Broad support was expressed for proposals to shift the focus of the CGIAR towards programs, as defined within the core research agenda. But programs would be carried out by centers and both programs and institutions should be taken into account in resource allocation for research. Some questions were raised, however, as to whether the emphasis on programs would be a real change or another way of describing the existing situation.

Taking note of the different approaches in the reports discussed, and on the basis of the points made during the discussions, the Group decided that:

- There is urgent need to ensure continuity of research on problems of international significance in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and the CGIAR should remain a pillar of the global agricultural research system confronting the global challenges of hunger, food security and environmental degradation.
- The vision for the CGIAR aims at adjusting the existing system, not creating a new one. The CGIAR system
should be open and inclusive in its relations with compatible institutions. The CGIAR can and will fully position itself within the overall global research effort, recognizing the work of other actors in the developing countries and OECD.

- The focus of CGIAR programs should be global strategic research, including primarily germplasm development, natural resources management, policy and management.

- NARS perspectives will be integrated within the CGIAR policy framework, but the task of strengthening NARS will be primarily the responsibility of other institutions including the World Bank, drawing on the special skills of CGIAR scientists when these are critical to success.

- The CGIAR should ensure continued funding for priority programs carried out by centers, and configurations of centers in partnership with other institutions in developing and developed countries.

- A single, relatively brief, vision statement should be prepared under the Chairman's guidance, submitted for adoption at ICW94 and, thereafter, should serve as the basic document for the proposed High-level Conference in 1995.

**STRENGTHENING CGIAR GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION**

The Group discussed two reports from the CGIAR Oversight Committee, one on governance, the other outlining interim recommendations on organizational matters. Both reports were prepared in response to requests from the Group for options on how to improve its way of conducting business.

Mr. Serageldin reminded the Group that the discussion had two broad objectives. First, to address the philosophical thrust of the options identified by the Oversight Committee in order to gain a sense of direction on matters of governance and structure. Second, to react to specific recommendations.

Introducing the reports, Oversight Committee chairman Paul Egger (Switzerland) said that the committee had attempted both to explore the philosophical underpinning of the CGIAR and to propose options by which the philosophy could be reflected in an effective and productive system. They had looked both at the broad picture -- linkages, partnerships and so on -- and at sectors of operation. The committee's overriding purpose was to propose options for achieving the system's objectives -- food for the poor and resource conservation. The committee felt that there were opportunities for improved decision making and looked forward to the Group's reaction to the committee's suggestions.

The committee was commended for the diligence with which it had set about its responsibilities. The committee had put into concrete form many of the thoughts and possibilities that had been articulated around the table with less precision. In doing so, the Group felt, the committee had made an invaluable contribution towards providing the momentum for much needed changes in the system.

There was strong (but not unanimous) support for the view that at the moment the system needs more rather than less centralization of decision-making. Several speakers expressed concern that, if left alone, centrifugal forces at work would cause greater decentralization than existed at present, possibly causing the disintegration of the system. But centralization, delegates felt, should be in the Group's decision-making structure, not in the operating arm of the system (i.e. the centers). Welcoming the magnetic leadership shown by Mr. Serageldin and by the World Bank at a critical phase in the history of the CGIAR, a substantial majority of delegates spoke of a need to supplement firm
leadership from the chair with the support of an executive committee. Participants argued, equally strongly, that the collegiality which has been the defining characteristic of the CGIAR since its inception should not be changed or destroyed. In an effort to maintain some of the Group’s loose knit character while at the same time tightening up decision making, Mr. Serageldin suggested the creation of a Steering Committee. The suggestion was endorsed.

There was considerable discussion of a suggestion that the CGIAR should reduce the number of its meetings to one a year. Delegates felt that this option should be carefully examined and, if found appropriate, introduced only after 1995. The Oversight Committee’s “single board” option for the centers did not receive support. Similarly, the “divisionalized structure” option -- dividing programs into systemwide or regional initiatives managed by boards -- was considered not feasible at this point in the CGIAR’s evolution, although several speakers recognized the possibility of some institutional mergers along the lines of IPGRI-INIBAP or ILCA-ILRAD, after reviewing the experience of these mergers. The need to improve board performance was stressed and there was some support of the notion that the size of the boards could be reduced in general, but without rigid norms. The Group endorsed the Committee’s positive views on TAC.

The Group acknowledged that the relationship between developing countries and the CGIAR continued to be far from ideal. Delegates urged that a mechanism be identified through which developing countries could feel a greater ownership of the system and through which developing country perspectives could be unmistakably embedded in the policies of the CGIAR. The work of regional representatives was commended but the point was made that there was no clarity as to whom the regional representatives represent.

The idea of a study or studies on governance, decision-making and financing arrangements was generally endorsed. Reservations were expressed about the utility of entrusting the task completely to a management consulting firm. However, there was support for the view that getting views of outsiders on these issues was important. It was recognized that, regardless of whether the studies needed were conducted by external, internal or a mixture of internal and external expertise, these would constitute important inputs to the formulation of recommendations to the CGIAR.

The discussion led to the following decisions:

- As a significant step in the direction of governance overhaul, a 15-member Steering Committee will be established under the chairmanship of the CGIAR Chairman, to add dynamism to the Group’s decision-making processes.
- The Steering Committee will consist of members of the Finance and Oversight Committees which will continue to function as standing committees of the Steering Committee.
- In broad terms, the Steering Committee’s mandate is to help steer the CGIAR through the 18-month transition period adopted by the Group. The Steering Committee will help provide the system with options and guidance on forms of governance, on priorities, on securing commitment by the donors to fund agreed priority programs fully, on ensuring transparency and accountability in funding arrangements, and on the system’s relations with partners in the global research system.
- Research programs will continue to be managed by autonomous centers, each with its own board of trustees. The role, size and composition of boards will continue to be under review as part of governance overhaul. Inter-center
collaboration and system-wide programs within the core research agenda will be encouraged in the interests of discipline and cost-efficiency.

- Cosponsors will continue to provide the system with counsel and to provide it with an international anchor.
- TAC will continue to be a pillar of the system, providing both donors and centers with independent technical advice of high quality.

**Financial Strategies**

Financial strategies for the CGIAR were discussed in the context of the funding crisis, the Chairman's proposals for renewal of the system, an inquiry into alternate sources of funding underway by external consultants, and studies by the Finance Committee of different aspects of CGIAR funding.

The consensus of the Group was that financial arrangements should be reformed to increase transparency and accountability and bring predictability to the budget. The watchwords of the reformed financial management should be increased effectiveness and efficiency of a system that is more than the sum of its parts. This requires that the agreed research agenda and work program, which constitute the CGIAR's mandate, be articulated in a comprehensible and transparent fashion, and be used as the benchmark against which various activities would be funded and the progress of their implementation monitored.

A matrix approach was adopted as an organizing framework to meet these needs. This matrix approach, by plotting system programs in relation to centers, explicitly recognizes the ability of each donor to provide its support to an individual center (with freedom to reallocate between activities within that center's work program) or to individual programs (with freedom to reallocate between centers active in the implementation of that program) or to a specific cell in the matrix (an individual activity in a particular center) or contribute to the system. The transparency provided by this approach should enable the Group to ensure that no part of the overall research agenda and work program adopted in the matrix remains unfunded and that no individual cell of the matrix is oversubscribed.

It was agreed that for the transition years 1994/95, the currently agreed research agenda and work program -- recommended by the Group's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), approved by donors and costed at $270 million -- would not be put in question, but that a new agenda and related budget could be considered for the 1996 program.

Every effort will be made for donors to come to ICW94 next October, with as much clarity as possible about their intentions for funding the 1995 program, so that a definitive budget can be prepared for the centers. The objectives would be that the centers should have their budgets in November, and be in possession of at least 50 percent of that budget by January 1, 1995 with the remaining 50 percent in hand no later than June of 1995. It was also recognized that some donors would have to make conditional pledges depending on their parliamentary or other statutory approval procedures, but the pledges would be serious proposals that would have a high probability of being confirmed.

For the transparency of the new system to work, it was agreed that the CGIAR Secretariat had to function as a clearing house for all the data about financial agreements and flows between the donors and the centers. The donors agreed to collaborate by reporting promptly all such agreements and transactions so that the Secretariat's reports to the Group could be comprehensive, accurate and transparent.

In accordance with the adoption of the matrix approach described above, the World Bank would henceforth count its contribution
as 15 percent of contributions to the program as defined by the matrix. Funding provided by donors for activities falling outside the matrix would not be recognized as part of the approved research agenda and would not be counted by the Bank in calculating its 15 percent contribution.

The rules for calculating and disbursing the new funds to be provided by the Bank ($20 million over 1994/95) to match new funds provided by donors and/or complementary activities currently outside of the $270 million agenda being brought into the approved agenda is being issued to the centers by the CGIAR Finance Committee.

**Policies and Operational Issues**

*Stripe Review of Plant Genetic Resources*

The Group considered the report of a panel chaired by Mr. Henry L. Shands that conducted a "stripe review" (across the system) of genetic resources work in the CGIAR. The panel was thanked and commended for a substantive report on a topic of significance both to the CGIAR and its developing country partners.

The report said that to respond efficiently and effectively to the global demands on genetic resources, "the CGIAR must leap from its paradigm of individual voices at autonomous centers to a fully coordinated policy on genetic resources management across the system." Arguing, as well, for "greater visibility" of the system's efforts in genetic resources, the report said "anything less may bring undesirable responses through further funding cuts, reduced access to genetic resources and continued controversy."

The report made the following major recommendations:

1. All genetic resources work at CGIAR centers should be integrated into a single systemwide program, within which policies will be developed and coordinated.
2. All genetic resources work should be the responsibility of a central administration.
3. The systemwide genetic resources program should be supported by a single, program fund.
4. CGIAR germplasm collection should be held in trust for the international community and in conformity with the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
5. Centers should not seek to benefit financially from the commercialization of germplasm, but should work with NARS at their request, should opportunities for commercialization arise.
6. A standardized system of information management should be created by the CGIAR genetic resources program so as to simplify communications with NARS.

Center directors proposed, and TAC agreed, that a lead center from among existing CGIAR centers should be appointed as the focal point for a systemwide genetic resources program; and to provide a secretariat for the Inter-Center Working Group on Genetic Resources.

The panel’s proposal for a central administration to be in overall charge of genetic resources work was extensively discussed. The panel chairman suggested that the alternative proposed by center directors was too weak because center directors would have problems taking a global perspective. Mr. McCalla pointed out that TAC had considered and endorsed the center directors’ proposal. This position was strongly reaffirmed by Mr. Gustavo Nores, chairman of the Center Directors Committee (CDC). Mr. Nores emphasized, too, that additional funding would
be required for the Genetic Resource Units at the centers to take on the wider role inherent in the recommendations of the stripe review.

There was support in general for the center directors' proposal, and several delegates said that a central mechanism should be competent to function both internally and externally. The CGIAR, they urged, should play an active role in the international process. The point was made that acceptance of this option would provide a test case on whether a systemwide strategy could be operated without a strong degree of central control. It was also suggested that the director in charge of the systemwide program might need some authority over allocating funds for genetic resources. The view that the system should earmark dedicated funds for genetic resources work was endorsed. Participants suggested that TAC should play a role in the continued development of plant genetic resources work.

Bringing the discussion to a close, Mr. Serageldin summarized the following decisions:

- The "in trust" status of CGIAR collections is reaffirmed, with the understanding that the collections will be placed under the umbrella of an international agreement.

- The Genetic Resources Units at the centers will be elevated to Program status or equivalent and will take on a wider mandate than the servicing of the Center breeding programs at the centers.

- Centers will receive separate funding for genetic resources work which will not be fungible across their other activities.

- The Intercenter Working Group on Genetic Resources (ICWG-GR) will be the CGIAR steering committee to guide policy and management of genetic resources.

- IPGRI will be the lead center on genetic resources programs and the IPGRI Director General will be director of the systemwide Program on Genetic Resources. IPGRI will provide a small secretariat for the ICWG-GR. Resource allocation will be TAC's responsibility.

- A standardized information system and database will be developed for the genetic resources of the CGIAR.

Agreement with FAO on Plant Genetic Resources

The Group reviewed a draft agreement by which each CGIAR center that maintains a collection of plant genetic resources would place its collection under the auspices of the FAO.

The purpose of the agreement is to provide an international legal framework for a vigorous multilateral plant genetic resources system, especially for major food crops. A series of consultations, studies and negotiations involving the Group, Center Directors, and FAO preceded formulation of the draft. The CGIAR Oversight Committee urged that the draft be brought to the attention of MTM94, in the context of the stripe review on genetic resources.

The draft was introduced by Mr. Lukas Brader, chairman of the Inter-Center Working Group on Genetic Resources, who said that there was some urgency in dealing with the agreement because of the strength of voices wanting materials to be returned to their countries of origin. He believed the agreement could be signed as soon as possible with a covering letter which expanded explanations in some articles of the agreement. The FAO delegate reiterated his organization's appreciation of the open and forthcoming nature of FAO-CGIAR discussions. The agreement could be signed as expeditiously as the CGIAR wished. The World Bank
representative stressed the need to stand behind the longstanding strength of the CGIAR in terms of its principle of the free exchange of genetic resources and their continued international collection, conservation, interchange and utilization.

The principle of placing CGIAR collections under an international authority, while ensuring open access, was endorsed but some concerns were voiced in the discussion of the draft agreement. Among the issues raised was the need for clarity on commitments, and the legal question of how one copes with the variety of international conventions that touch on the subject. Several speakers questioned the urgency for signing agreements, particularly because the sequence of forthcoming meetings on biodiversity would help clarify global needs and responses, thereby offering valuable supplementary information for better agreements.

The chairman of the plant genetic resources stripe review panel said that a very favorable draft had been developed but that it might be useful to place the process on a "slower track" in order to harmonize the views of the CGIAR and the thrust of the agreement with the views of the parties to the Convention of Biological Diversity who would be meeting at Nairobi in June. The CGIAR, he urged, should make its presence known at that meeting and discuss the issue there. A member of the review panel said it was very important for the CGIAR and FAO to conclude an agreement as soon as possible so that together they could approach the Biodiversity Convention when it meets at the end of the year. He agreed that the June meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention on Biological Diversity (ICCBD) would be an appropriate time for the CGIAR to have discussions with governments there. He suggested that the CGIAR and FAO might have discussions there together. Donors felt that as the Group had decided on a systemwide approach to genetic resources work it would be appropriate for the CGIAR to sign an agreement covering the collections as a whole -- and not get into center by center agreements.

Mr. Serageldin summed up the decisions as follows:

- The CGIAR upholds the principle of free access to its germplasm collections, the principle of trusteeship, and the principle of no commercial gain for the centers from germplasm.
- The Group wishes to harmonize these positions with the views of the Biodiversity Convention, the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources and other appropriate institutions.
- The Group reaffirmed its commitment to signing an agreement which will place CGIAR germplasm collections under the auspices of FAO. The timing of the agreement should take into account the deliberations of other parties such as the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention on Biological Diversity (ICCBD).
- As the Group has decided on a systemwide approach to plant genetic resources work, an agreement covering CGIAR collections should be entered into on behalf of the system as a whole.
- Legal questions concerning relations with international conventions and international organizations need to be clarified.

Mr. Serageldin undertook to set in motion the contacts (e.g. with the ICCBD) required for a harmonizing of views, and to obtain the necessarily clarifications through consultations in conjunction with cosponsors.
Policy Towards Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union

At ICW93, the Oversight Committee was asked to develop a policy for CGIAR relations with Eastern Europe and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. A report from the Oversight Committee to MTM94 suggested that the CGIAR should maintain a restrictive attitude to the expansion of its activities in these countries. No activities should be carried out in a manner that infringes on the capacities of CGIAR centers to carry out their mandates in the "traditional" developing countries.

Mr. Johan Holmberg (Sweden), presenting the committee's report, said that the suggestion was influenced primarily by the financial situation of the CGIAR. He stressed, however, that the CGIAR should maintain open scientific contact -- including the monitoring of scientific developments -- with the countries concerned, that the region should be adequately represented (through the regional representatives mechanism) in the CGIAR, and that previously approved activities by CGIAR centers in these countries should continue. He raised the possibility, as well, that some countries in the region would want to join the CGIAR.

Among the points made when the report was discussed were the importance of academic exchange between CGIAR centers and their counterpart institutions in the region, the importance of rejuvenating agriculture in the countries concerned, the absolute necessity to ensure that any CGIAR activities in the countries concerned were within the parameters of the system's core agenda and on the basis of additional funding, thus avoiding resource transfers from other regions.

The Group endorsed the Oversight Committee's report and agreed to proceed in a prudent manner in expanding activities in the region; to encourage the expansion of scientificacademic contacts; and to invite FAO to arrange for representatives from the region to be included among regional representation elected through FAO.

Followup to UNCED/Agenda 21

At International Centers Week 1993, a CGIAR Task Force established at MTM93 to sharpen the CGIAR response to UNCED's Agenda 21 was invited to develop preliminary concept proposals for Agenda 21 projects relating to marginal lands; integrated pest management; in situ conservation of crop, livestock, fish and forest genetic resources; and geographical information systems (GIS agroecological databases). In developing marginal land proposals, the Task Force was urged to take special note of the emerging results of an IBSRAM study which would be available early in 1994.

The CGIAR Task Force, led by Mr. Stein Bie (Norway) consulted widely both within and outside the CGIAR to prepare the proposals that were reviewed at MTM94. Presenting the report of the Task Force to the Group, Mr. Bie said that the CGIAR has a strong claim to specialized skills which can contribute to implementation the UNCED agenda. With dedicated, additional funds, therefore, the CGIAR could contribute significantly to the goals of UNCED and Agenda 21. Emphasizing the consensual approach taken by the Task Force in carrying out its mandate, Mr. Bie said that one of its most significant achievements is that it had secured the full support of the centers which had taken ownership of the proposed initiatives. Mr. Dennis Greenland introduced the complementary IBSRAM paper. He emphasized the need for a "clearing house" to ensure communication and information flows in the broad area of soil, water, and nutrient management.
The report of the Task Force and the IBSRAM report were both well received, and those responsible were commended for producing documents relevant not only to the CGIAR but to the international community. Several delegates suggested that in the follow-up process, efforts should be made to establish linkages among the various initiatives being undertaken in different parts of the world. An identification of synergies and a pooling of resources would eliminate duplication and strengthen the efforts undertaken.

UNEP expressed satisfaction at having been part of the Task Force and with the proposals under consideration. The UNEP delegate said he felt that the proposals from the Task Force will translate into a concrete Agenda 21 framework and stressed that UNEP is committed to continued collaboration with the CGIAR and the IBSRAM Group. UNEP's institutional assessment was that the substance of both reports was wholly congruent with the priorities expressed by the UNEP Board. He reminded the Group that over 10 chapters of Agenda 21 related to the work of the CGIAR.

On behalf of the Center Directors, CDC chairman Gustavo Nores endorsed the Task Force report and offered the CDC as a communication center to ensure lessons learned from experiences across the globe would be synthesized.

Mr. McCalla pointed out that the report did not come to the March TAC meeting but would be considered by TAC in June together with the IBSRAM report. He announced that a stripe review of natural resources management research in the CGIAR will be proposed to TAC.

In response to a question from the floor, Mr. Serageldin said that funds offered for Agenda 21 proposals would be classified as core, though not for the 1994 budget.

Two negative comments were made about the report of the Task Force: that it is a "shopping list" rather than a set of proposals and that it had paid inadequate attention to water use efficiency and too much to marginal lands.

Mr. Serageldin summed up the discussion as follows:

- The CGIAR link with UNCED's Agenda 21 is clear and accepted.
- The research thrusts proposed by the Task Force squarely address the question of natural resource management and the need for a participatory research approach in this area.
- There is a clearing house function to be performed, the GIS database initiative is one area which reflects this.
- The proposals are devolved for further development to the centers that are focal points for natural resource management activities. These centers will work through the TAC process. TAC will call on Task Force representatives for help in the process.

Livestock Research in the CGIAR

Mr. Robert W. Herdt (Rockefeller Foundation), representing the implementing agency for Group decisions on livestock research, outlined the schedule by which livestock research would be restructured so that a single institution, with a unified vision, could start up on January 1, 1995. Proposals for establishing the new institution -- the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) -- will be presented to the Group at ICW94.

During the discussion that followed Mr. Herdt's progress report, a delegate urged that the restructuring exercise should be tracked both for the costs involved and the savings realized as this data would provide the Group with invaluable information on which to base future decisions in other areas of research,
should the need arise. Another point made was that ILRI’s research programs should take into account the significant differences between the livestock situation in Asia and Africa. In this connection, it was suggested that the Asian region should be covered by ecoregional programs with a livestock component and that Asian NARS should be consulted before final decisions are reached on matters affecting the region. There was broad agreement that the proposals made for systemwide coordination in genetic resources would be relevant to the choice of mechanisms for implementing a global strategy for livestock research.

The TAC Chair expressed the hope that ILRI’s Medium Term Plan (MTP) would be clear on how system wide fund funds reserved for livestock research would be used.

Summing up, Mr. Serageldin said that ILRI’s MTP and revised strategy document would be ready for TAC’s review by June so that a final report on the new institution could be prepared in time for ICW94. He commended the exemplary cooperation of ILRAD and ILCA in the restructuring process and recorded the Group’s endorsement of the progress made.

ACTIVITY REPORTS

TAC Chair

Reporting on TAC activities that were not directly connected with items on the MTM94 agenda, Mr. McCalla covered, mainly, the beginning of a new Priorities and Strategies exercise, external reviews, and systemwide programs.

Mr. McCalla announced that TAC would soon be launching its next priority setting exercise. The kinds of changes in the functioning of the CGIAR system under consideration at MTM94 would probably require rethinking by TAC on the substance and process of priority setting. This would be facilitated, he felt, by the constructive dialogue that TAC had begun with center directors on a range of issues connected with priority setting.

The TAC Chair dealt with several aspects of external reviews. He said that TAC was attempting to improve the review process so that it could provide stakeholders with periodic verification of the relevance and effectiveness of CGIAR-funded programs. An intersecretariat working group was appointed to study the question. At its initiative, the terms of reference and guidelines for external reviews are being streamlined, alternate models for reviews are under consideration, and every effort is being made to develop a better approach for evaluating NARS-centers linkages. TAC’s Standing Committee on external reviews had identified several issues affecting the efficiency of external reviews. The issues are better feedback from donors, greatly improved impact assessment, internal review processes at centers, and input from national systems. The work in progress would be discussed at the next TAC meeting in the expectation that a final report could be prepared for discussion by the Group.

Meanwhile, the external review of IIMI had been completed and preparations were underway for reviews of CIP, CIAT and IITA and for a mid-term review of ICLARM, all to take place in 1995. Some stripe reviews were suspended because of the funding situation. These would be reinstated as soon as possible, and stripe reviews would be conducted for public policy, public management and institution building, CGIAR commitments in West Africa, roots and tubers, and cereals. A review on natural resource management with special emphasis on soils and water would be proposed to TAC.

A special meeting of TAC to be convened in August 1995 would discuss systemwide programs, which had acquired greater importance than before in the light of the emerging emphasis on a more programmatic thrust across the CGIAR, and resource allocation.
Mr. McCalla informed the Group that in response to the need for economies, TAC had dropped in size from 18 members some years ago to 14 currently, and that from 1995 the number of TAC meetings per year would be reduced from three to two.

TAC was commended for its work in support of the scientific excellence of the system. Clarifications were sought on funding for reviews and on the issue of impact assessment.

Concluding the discussion, Mr. Serageldin informed the Group that Mr. McCalla would be the Director of the World Bank’s Agriculture and Natural Resources Department from mid-September but, by mutual agreement, would continue devoting required time and attention to TAC matters until ICW94. Mr. Serageldin paid tribute to the dedication, integrity, capacity and talent shown by Mr. McCalla as TAC Chair. This assessment was acknowledged by acclamation.

Mr. Serageldin reported, too, that cosponsors had reaffirmed the Oversight Committee’s view of TAC as a pillar of the system. Accordingly, TAC members whose terms had been held to shorter periods than usual while TAC’s role in the system was reviewed would be appointed to the normal two year terms.

Chairman, Oversight Committee

As the work and recommendations of the Oversight Committee had come up under other agenda items, the committee’s chairman Mr. Paul Egger said that he would restrict his report to activities that required follow up.

Following are the main points he made.

Collaboration with NARS. Mr. Chopra was the committee’s focal point for this topic and he would be preparing a proposal after further consultation with colleagues in developing country research systems and representatives of regional programs.

Structural Change. The CGIAR system can and should be put on a new footing, but some structural change could be undertaken within the system while a new agenda is being developed.

Plant Genetic Resources. The committee was glad that the proposed draft agreement with FAO on plant genetic resources had been brought to the attention of the Group and was willing to undertake any necessary follow up action.

Planning and Review Process. The committee welcomed the fact that TAC was scrutinizing the system’s reviews and would like to interact with TAC on this issue, particularly on the question of devising mechanisms for linking external and internal reviews.

Research Impact. Donors needed information on the impact of the research they funded and hoped that this could be made available annually. The Secretariat should play the role of catalyst and coordinator, in collaboration with the centers.

TAC Chairmanship. The previous chairman had indicated that a process of consultation within the system would precede the appointment of a new TAC chairman and the committee, on behalf of the Group, sought clarification on this point.

The Group commended the chairman and members of the Oversight Committee for the vigor they had brought to their duties and endorsed his report. As the committee was new, they had no precedents to guide them, and they were creating their own precedents through diligence and cooperation with other components of the system. It was agreed that while the two committees would unite in a Steering Committee under the leadership of the
CGIAR Chairman each committee would continue to carry out its responsibilities and work out its agenda at least during the initial two year period of their mandate (i.e. until 1996).

Mr. Serageldin said that consultation in connection with the appointment of a new TAC chairman would be discreet and informal, following the pattern established for his own appointment.

Chairman, Finance Committee

The dominant theme of the Finance Committee’s work was the financial health of the system, and the committee’s completed and continuing activities formed part of the discussion on financial strategy which was a separate agenda item. Reporting on the work of the Finance Committee in general, Mr. Petit covered the following specific issues and endeavors.

Committee Membership. Rotation of committee membership had been considered but the composition of the committee will remain unchanged during its two-year mandate in the interests of maintaining the continuity necessary in a period of transition.

Interaction. The committee had held several meetings and had also interacted with other components of the system such as the Oversight Committee and the Public Awareness and Resource Mobilization subcommittee of the Center Directors Committee. These consultations had enabled the Finance Committee to develop a systemwide perspective in carrying out its responsibilities.

Relations with TAC. The Finance Committee viewed itself as a subgroup of donors reporting to donors. The question of a “division of labor” with TAC therefore did not arise. The committee’s work was complementary to that of TAC. The committee reviewed recommendations from TAC and conveyed its reactions to the general Group membership in the interest of facilitating well informed decision making.

Restructuring. In the course of examining the overall financial picture, the committee had examined various aspects of restructuring the system. The committee was concerned that while restructuring was widely perceived as a means of reducing costs there were, in fact, special costs that would be built into any process of restructuring. These included, for instance, severance pay for center staff, as well as “bridging” funds that would be needed to maintain the essential programs of a center that was being reduced in size or amalgamated with another.

World Bank Contribution. The committee reviewed and confirmed the “gap filling” formula adopted at ICW93 for the disbursement of the second tranche of the World Bank’s regular contribution.

The Group commended the chairman and members of the committee for the custodial role they played in helping to husband the system’s resources. The committee was dealing with system finances at a very difficult time and the spirit in which they approached their task was highly appreciated. The Group agreed that continuity of membership should be maintained and urged that greater clarity be sought in the linkages between the committee and other components of the system. Speed in formulating rules for disbursing World Bank funds under a “matching funds” arrangement was encouraged as well.

Membership

The Russian Federation and the Republic of South Africa were represented at MTM94 as observers, each for the first time. During the course of the meeting the Russian Federation was admitted to CGIAR membership by acclamation and Russian delegate Victor
Sheveluha offered full cooperation between the research community in his country and CGIAR scientists. South African representative Gideon Carstens said that his country was interested in CGIAR membership and, as well, hoped that the CGIAR would hold a Mid-Term Meeting there.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The Group reviewed possible locations for future Mid-Term Meetings and reconfirmed the following dates:

1994 -- ICW, October 24-28, Washington, D.C.

1995 -- MTM, May 22-26; ICW, October 30-November 3, Washington, D.C.


OTHER BUSINESS

Welcome

The Group formally welcomed ICLARM Director General Meryl Williams who was attending the meeting of the Group as a center director for the first time.

Farewell

The Group paid warm tribute to CIAT Director General Gustavo Nores, who is ending his tenure, both for his all-round leadership and for his personal qualities as a friendly colleague. The Group bade farewell, too, to Mr. Taff Davies (UK) and Mr. Austin Mescal (Ireland) who are retiring.

PARC

Mr. Per Pinstrup Andersen, chairman of the Public Awareness and Resource Mobilization Sub-Committee (PARC) of the Center Directors Committee reported that the committee had been reconstituted to make it more effective.

The committee would next meet in August when it would be developing a fund raising and public awareness strategy that would dovetail with the strategy of the Finance Committee.

Crawford Fund

Mr. Derek Tribe, Executive Director of Australia’s Fund, reported on the public awareness programs carried out in Australia. They had accomplished much with a small budget. Their success, he felt, was due mainly to three factors: the right message, the appropriate target, and effective messengers. The role of the Crawford Fund is that of a friend of the CGIAR family, and it will continue to play that role in a familial way -- with affection and strong support.

CHAIRMAN’S CLOSING REMARKS

In his closing remarks, Mr. Serageldin said he was certain that Center Directors who were present and many others would carry away a very clear signal from MTM94 that there has been a purposeful renewal, that there is a rededication and commitment of everyone at the meeting to make the system work.

They could all be satisfied, he added, that they had lived up to that unique and indelible characteristic of the Consultative Group, which is the sense of commitment that makes it a unique and non-existent structure, except by the goodwill of its members.

Mr. Serageldin said that the CGIAR was specially privileged to be in India and, in particular, to have had the honor of having the Prime Minister of India come in person to open their proceedings and, by his presence, mark the importance that he attaches to agricultural research. Mr. Narasimha Rao had set aside his notes and spoken from the heart in a manner that moved everybody present. "After such a gesture and such an action, can anyone in the North still doubt the importance of this Group to developing country NARS or, more
importantly, to their ultimate clients?" Mr. Serageldin asked.

He wished to convey their deep gratitude to the Prime Minister through Mr. V. L. Chopra, head of the National Host Committee. He would thank, as well, all those who contributed to make the meeting a seamless success, beginning with Mr. Chopra and his indefatigable colleagues. Mr. Serageldin went on to thank the hotel management and staff, the interpreters, the Bank-Fund conference organizers, the organizers and participants in the MTM Symposium, the TAC Chair and colleagues, the CGIAR Executive Secretary, the CGIAR staff, and most of all, the CGIAR representatives around the table.

The great Indian emperor after whom the hotel in which the CGIAR meeting took place is named, turned from a legendary career of imperial conquest to a much more memorable career of domestic and regional social reform. He arranged for his views on governance and the objectives of social change that he espoused to be carved on rock edicts as permanent reminders of how the human family should manage its own self-fulfillment. The common thread that runs through these edicts is an emphasis on helping the poor and the weak.

CGIAR members had acted in the same spirit. They had retained their focus on the ultimate beneficiaries, the world’s poor and disadvantaged. Delegates could therefore leave the mid-term meeting with pride in their recommitment to principles and actions that will benefit those on whose behalf the CGIAR was founded and for whom it must endure.

In the future, as in the past, the highest quality of international agricultural research can be brought to bear on the problems of the world’s impoverished, and for this there needs to be total implementation of the program of renewal that was sketched out here in New Delhi.

"There must not be, there will not be, a turning back, and that is the signal and the message of New Delhi."

The meeting was then adjourned.
END NOTES

/1 The full text of the Prime Minister's speech is available from the CGIAR Information Center. Tel. No. 202-4738949; Fax No. 202-4738110; EMail DLUCCA@WORLD BANK.ORG.

/2 For the full text, see Annex II.

/3 The CGIAR established a Finance Committee and an Oversight Committee at its 1993 Mid-Term Meeting (held in San Juan, Puerto Rico) to strengthen its decision making capacity.
ANNEX I

CGIAR MID-TERM MEETING 1994

AGENDA

Theme: REVITALIZING THE CGIAR

Tuesday, May 24

MORNING. Stocktaking -- Where are we at? How should we move ahead?
1. Opening Address by CGIAR Chairman
2. Discussion

AFTERNOON. A Vision for the CGIAR
1. Report by Vision Panel of Oversight Committee
2. Report by TAC
3. Report from Action Group on Food Security
5. Review of Swedish support to CGIAR
6. Needs and expectations of NARS
7. Discussion

Wednesday, May 25

MORNING. A Vision for the CGIAR (continued)

AFTERNOON. Review of Policies and Operational Issues
1. Towards a CGIAR Plant Genetic Resources Program -- Report of a TAC Stripe Review/Draft agreement with FAO
ANNEX I

2. CGIAR Policy toward Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States of the FSU

3. CGIAR Follow-up to UNCED/Agenda 21 -- Report by CGIAR Task Force

4. Livestock Research in the CGIAR -- Report by Implementing Agency

5. Discussion

Thursday, May 26

MORNING. Review of Policies and Operational Issues (continued)

AFTERNOON. Strengthening CGIAR Governance and Organization

1. Report by Oversight Committee
2. Discussion

Friday, May 27

MORNING. Financial Strategies

1. Report by Finance Committee
2. Discussion

Activity Reports by Standing Committees

1. TAC Chair
2. Chairman, Oversight Committee
3. Chairman, Finance Committee
4. Discussion

AFTERNOON. Conclusions and Next Steps

1. A Vision for the CGIAR
2. Strategies for Action
3. Strengthening CGIAR Governance and Organization

4. Financial Strategies

Chairman's Closing Remarks
CHAIRMAN’S OPENING ADDRESS

I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 1994 mid-term meeting of the CGIAR. I extend our appreciation to our Indian hosts for the superb setting they have provided for our deliberations. We were all deeply touched that the Prime Minister of India would personally give us a moving and stirring address to launch us on our deliberations.

I am also pleased to announce that the Russian Federation yesterday decided to join the CGIAR.

I also welcome as an observer Mr. Gideon Carstens from the South African Embassy in France. He represents his country’s Agricultural Research Council, and I hope that we can soon welcome South Africa as a CGIAR member.

It is a privilege for me to address you today. I have assumed the chairmanship of the CGIAR only since January. I consider it an honor to have been entrusted with this mandate, following, as I do, in the steps of many distinguished predecessors who have set very high standards that I will try to live up to.

It is a privilege to join the CGIAR, which has made so many contributions to improving the prospects of the world’s poor by making basic foods abundant and inexpensive. I am honored to have been chosen Chairman of the CGIAR as it enters this new phase of its existence, where new challenges in natural resource management -- including forests, fresh water, soils, coastal zones and the sea -- await us. Old challenges ably met in the past, increasing productivity in the face of ever increasing population pressure and maintaining the biological diversity of the crops that humanity depends on, remain barely at bay and require continuing effort and vigilance.

These challenges come at a time of tightening budgets everywhere. Resources are scarce. Efficiency and effectiveness in the use of the CGIAR resources must remain our watchwords. Much has already been done to streamline and adjust to leaner times. Many important programs have already been pared to the bone. I salute these efforts and sympathize with you for the difficult decisions that so many of you have had to make over the last few years. But the mission of the CGIAR is too vital to be sidelined by budget discussions. It should be the research agenda that drives the budget, not the other way around.

We must, within the realistically available and mobilizable resources, strive to maintain the thrust of our efforts. We must engage the international community in the demanding and unremitting task of meeting the challenge of feeding a world where a billion people go hungry today and to whose population will be added another billion over the next decade. A world that will have to feed 10 billion people by 2050, the challenge of global hunger, sustainable development, and sound resource management requires much in terms of policies, institution building and investment. But it will most
certainly require the results of serious research done today in order to meet the challenges of tomorrow. For that essential part of the equation, the CGIAR remains the single most effective tool available to the world community. My intervention today will cover a wide range of issues.

First, I will review the status of the CGIAR today and what I believe we must do about it. Here I would like to address the current crisis, the strong signal we need from these meetings and what the World Bank is willing to do for the CGIAR and for the national agricultural research systems (NARS).

Second, I propose launching a process of renewal. Here I will address issues of governance, focusing the agenda and articulating the vision.

I will conclude with a clear series of steps that we must take if we are to achieve the profound renewal of the CGIAR that we seek.

II. A TIME TO ACT

The System in Crisis

I started my tenure by going to the heart of the CGIAR system, the centers, to visit with and listen to the researchers. The raison d'être of the system is to make possible their work. To date, I have visited several centers and the picture is alarming. The sustained financial crisis and the conditions of uncertainty and perceived lack of support have been extremely corrosive.

I know that outstanding efforts have been made in the past few years. My predecessor, Mr. Rajagopalan, working with cosponsors, donors, directors general, and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), has done an outstanding job under very difficult circumstances by facing up to the crisis -- trimming the fat, focusing the agenda, and restructuring the system by merging four centers into two. Nevertheless, if the system is now much leaner and more focused than it was before, the crisis has not abated.

There is real risk that we are now cutting into the bone and can irretrievably damage future prospects of agricultural research. The researchers at the centers are demoralized. The best among them are beginning to leave the system. The downward spiral associated with the last three years must be reversed if we are not to damage irreparably one of the few effective means the international community has put in place to help agriculture in the developing world.

The crisis is not just one of inadequate funds. The crisis is as much of governance and management as it is of finance. The loose, unstructured form of the CGIAR has worked extremely well in its long period of growth. Uncertainty of funding simply meant uncertainty about the following year, or when and how to bring on line new activities being considered.

The basic agreed agenda was funded. The degree of expansion was the question. That, of course, is no longer the case. When the system had to cope with reducing budgets, it became clear that the unpredictability of funding undermined effective management in the centers and undercut the effective funding of the core research agenda collectively agreed at International Centers Week (ICW). The duplications and overlaps in the system resulting from a lack of clarity as to whether we are funding programs of work or funding individual centers has become intolerable. Change must come.
We must introduce transparency, accountability, and predictability in the system. This will require changing the old ways of doing things.

Thus, the nature of the current crisis is two-pronged: an immediate funding crisis that is sapping the morale of researchers and threatening the continued effectiveness of the system, and the more profound, longer-term problem of governance and management. We must tackle both together. One without the other will not be viable.

We need to attack this crisis in three ways. First, we must send a strong signal of our commitment to the renewal of the system. This must be done now. Second, and closely related, we must stabilize the funding and operations of the system for the next 18 months. This will give us time to rework the basic underlying governance and management issues and obtain the requisite consensus around them. Third, and essential to achieving that renewal, we must effectively articulate a vision of the system into the 21st Century that resolves these problems, recognizing the changing world in which the CGIAR exists and the diverse contributions of many different participants on the world scene.

What was appropriate in the past is not necessarily appropriate for the future. Renewal does not mean continuation of past practices. Change, however, must be guided by a vision, a sense of purpose, and a framework that will help translate that vision into reality. We must obtain the rededication of the international community at the highest levels for a renewed CGIAR. My views today are the result of extensive consultations with the cosponsors, donors, TAC, the Oversight and Finance Committees, center director generals and the chairpersons of the boards of trustees, as well as the secretariats in Rome and Washington. The consultations were both informal and formal. I am, therefore, hopeful that my remarks will respond adequately to a wide range of perspectives on what needs to be done and will garner the consensus of this assembly in support of the actions that we need to take now.

A Strong Signal

The description I have given of the system at the working level should cause us all the utmost concern. This is not an unduly alarmist view. It is shared by all who are familiar with the situation. They are unanimous in their expressions of concern. The question is what we are going to do about it. Therefore, I am requesting this assembly not leave New Delhi without making a series of important decisions -- decisions we will commit ourselves to implement expeditiously as soon as we return to our home offices.

We must send a strong and unambiguous signal to the entire system as to where we stand. This signal must have two components. First, we must stop this drift and uncertainty that is sapping the morale of the scientists. We must send them a strong message of our commitment to the system and its goals. This must be given now. It must be a signal that will enable researchers in the field to focus on their work programs with redoubled vigor, secure in the knowledge that the system is not losing the confidence of the donors; that there is a vision -- shared by the stakeholders and responsive to the needs of our ultimate clients, the farmers of the developing countries -- which the donor community is willing to support; that the purpose of the research is valued; and that the commitment to excellence is sustained unimpaired.
I am, therefore, asking you all to make a declaration of support in terms of funding the CGIAR that will indicate the erosion is over. I will be asking a number of you to address this point, today and in the days ahead.

Second, we need to send out an equally clear signal that it is not going to be business as usual. The CGIAR needs to introduce discipline in its operations requiring some changes in governance that will affect donors and centers alike. The watchwords of this change must be efficiency and effectiveness, because the system as a whole is more than the sum of its parts.

These changes must be directed at introducing predictability in funding and resource management, coupled with transparency and accountability. They must create a system of governance capable of making choices between well-articulated options and ensuring that the core research agenda, once arrived at and endorsed, is adequately funded before resources are diverted to other projects.

The links with NARS need to be turned into real partnerships. The voice of the ultimate client, the poor farmer, needs to be heard.

We must make clear to all not present here how seriously we are committed to this task of renewal of the CGIAR’s system of governance, and that this an inseparable part of our strong and continuing financial support to the system.

**The World Bank’s Response**

Subject to an adequate response from the donors, the World Bank is willing to do a lot to respond to this twin challenge of stabilizing the system’s finances and assisting the process of its renewal. Let me outline the full scope of the World Bank’s response to the CGIAR’s current problems.

First, the Bank will forgive the debts of the CGIAR to the World Bank, which are the result of advancing funds in excess of the prescribed agreements in previous years. This amount, totaling $5.6 million, is being turned into a grant as an exceptional gesture toward the CGIAR in a period of crisis. It is matched with a decision that the finances of the CGIAR must be put on a firmer footing, and the Bank will not extend any such loans in the future, no matter what the crisis may be. This is a one-time-only gesture.

Second, the Bank is willing to increase its participation in real terms by adjusting upward its declared ceiling of 15 percent of the core funding as currently defined to 15 percent of the core expenditures that match the TAC-recommended and donor-approved program of research. The present such program of research, adopted at ICW93, was costed at $270 million.

This is our way of acting on our stated position that it is the research agenda that must drive the financing, not the other way around. This would significantly expand the amount of Bank support. It reflects a recognition that a number of donors have difficulty in providing unrestricted core funding to the full amount required and are forced to use different funding programs to provide full support to the agreed research agenda.

To my mind, this change does not violate the spirit of the agreement whereby the Bank would provide 15 percent of the funding for the CGIAR up to $40 million. On the other hand, to the extent that complementary funding is being provided for activities that are not part of the agreed
research agenda and work program, the Bank will not recognize these as pertinent and will not include them in its calculation of the base against which the 15 percent would be applied.

Third, if donor support is forthcoming to the core agenda in substantial amounts, the ceiling that the Bank would be willing to go could exceed the current limit of $40 million. That is clearly a theoretical issue at present until the finances are stabilized and the system is put on a new and sounder footing. But, to the extent that donors are willing to commit themselves to funding a core research agenda of the CGIAR, they will find the Bank an active and ever greater contributor to this worthwhile enterprise.

Fourth, to help stabilize the funding situation in both 1994 and 1995, the Bank will waive the 15 percent rule and commit the present maximum of $40 million to each of those two years.

Fifth, the Bank will maintain its support to the secretariats of the TAC and the CGIAR at current levels for each of 1994 and 1995.

Sixth, the World Bank is be willing to help stabilize the financial situation of the system and ensure that the core research agenda recommended by the TAC and adopted by the donors is fully funded even in the transitional years of 1994 and 1995. The current estimate of the funding gap in the $270 million agenda is in the order of $30 million in each of 1994 and 1995. It is appalling that we could be committing approximately $290 million to the CGIAR and still have $30 million unfunded in the agreed-upon $270 million basic research agenda.

To meet this $60 million gap in 1994-95, the Bank would be willing to consider recommending to its board that we should fund one-third of this gap in a matching formula up to a maximum of $20 million, subject to donors coming up with their share of the funding, either by reallocating already committed funds from complementary programs outside the basic research agenda to items in the basic research agenda or by allocating new funds to fill the gap.

Seventh, the Bank is ready to play a more active role in stabilizing the funding structure of the CGIAR so that we will be able to have a more predictable system of budgeting and funding, less subject to fluctuations and uncertainty. It is inconceivable to me that we are halfway into the year without the centers knowing exactly what their budgets are for this year. While fully respecting the constraints each donor has in terms of timing and statutory obligations, we must be able to introduce predictability and precision in the financing and budgeting of the CGIAR.

I will personally work closely with the CGIAR Finance Committee and its Chairman, Mr. Michel Petit, to bring some order to these chaotic finances before ICW. I ask all donors to rise to the challenge of introducing some discipline in funding arrangements, and I hope that I am anticipating your cooperation in this all-important matter.

Without waiting for ICW, if there is sufficient donor support declared here today, and sufficient commitment to the idea of stabilizing the CGIAR finances in a predictable and meaningful fashion, and working toward the renewal that I have sketched out, then the Bank would be willing to make the contributions that I have outlined, including recommending to our Board of Directors the additional one-time-only effort of funding a third of a $60 million gap on a matching basis up to a maximum of $20 million.
Whether this generous increase of the Bank’s financial support to the CGIAR materializes or not is entirely dependent on the actions that you, the donors, will take here in this assembly. At the end of this Mid-Term Meeting I will announce the results, one way or the other, and the CGIAR system will have received its signal. I believe the Bank’s position has now been made abundantly clear, and the onus of the decision rests with you.

**Strengthening the NARS**

Many donors have been concerned that the CGIAR should work more at strengthening national agricultural research systems. One of the CGIAR centers, the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR), is devoted to this task. But the rest of the CGIAR system is really devoted to research. Technical assistance and capacity building are different and difficult tasks, even with much larger resources. I think the International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs) should collaborate with NARS. Indeed, I would elevate collaboration to real partnerships through consortia and other means, but the CGIAR should not become an all-purpose development tool. It should not take on the task of strengthening NARS in some 100 developing countries. This should be handled by other resources.

To meet this very legitimate concern, I will establish beginning July 1 a new group in the World Bank, to be headed by Mr. Petit, reporting directly to me and working in close collaboration with the Bank’s Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, which as of mid-September will be headed by Mr. Alexander McCalla. The primary responsibility of Mr. Petit’s new group will be to build the desired bridge between the work of the IARCs and the needs of the NARS and national extension services, without which research would not translate to impact on the farms. I propose that the bulk of the funding for the national agricultural research and extension systems come from regular official development assistance funds, including the World Bank’s lending program. Mr. Petit and two other senior colleagues working in that group will have primary responsibility for building the bridge between the CGIAR and our regional lending programs.

The problems of strengthening the NARS and extension systems are real. While some national agricultural research systems are incredibly sophisticated and competent and are increasingly taking the lead in a wide range of programs, that is not generally true of the majority of developing countries. I do not believe the real issue is money. It is the national political will to give NARS and extension systems the priority that they deserve. We at the Bank are willing to reflect that priority by issuing an invitation to the governments of the developing countries. The World Bank would be willing to put up to $500 million of combined World Bank and International Development Association resources annually for each of the next five years, a total of $2.5 billion, to support developing country NARS and extension systems provided the governments concerned are willing to ask for this support and are willing to make the necessary institutional commitments domestically to strengthen these services.

For many years, national agricultural research systems in many developing countries have suffered from weak institutions, limited commitments from public authorities, and, adding to low morale, insufficient recurrent expenditures and generally low effectiveness of the resources devoted to research.
In recent years, pressures to reduce public expenditures have tended to worsen the situation in many countries. This has led several donors and many developing country officials to either criticize or to put pressure on the CGIAR centers to devote more attention to strengthening their NARS through training, technical assistance, and sometimes even financial support.

Unfortunately, the real issue for the NARS and for those external financiers who are willing to help is, at least partly, the absence of well-prepared research and extension projects suitable for external funding. This absence certainly reflects a lack of political support in developing countries which has much to do with the problem.

If that diagnosis is correct, the problems will not be solved by the overstretched CGIAR centers doing a little more here and there with the scarce grant funds available to them. We must develop, formulate, and disseminate a comprehensive strategy of support to, and promotion of technology development and diffusion in agriculture. But within such a strategy the specific role of the CGIAR, carrying out research of a genuinely international nature, which it alone can undertake, should be reasserted.

National research and extension activities must also be supported, but this must be done with resources other than the scarce grant funds available for international research through the CGIAR. This, therefore, is the logic behind my offer of $2.5 billion from the World Bank into strengthening national agricultural research and extension systems over the next five years.

I hope other donors will join us in this enterprise, and that developing country governments will avail themselves of this offer, which, I repeat, requires that they agree to give these agricultural systems the requisite priority and make the necessary domestic institutional and financial commitments to make them the viable instruments that we hope for them to be.

III. LAUNCHING THE PROCESS OF RENEWAL

Let me now return to the more profound changes that must be introduced for the renewal of the CGIAR -- the issues of governance, the research agenda, and the need for a vision.

On Governance

Governance is different from restructuring, and from the management and administration of the system. Action is already underway on all three fronts.

On restructuring, Mr. Rajagopalan and you have already taken major steps to consolidate the two livestock centers in Africa, and the Montpelier and Rome centers dealing with genetic resources. The key is to implement these mergers promptly and smoothly. I have met with the working group involved with the merger of the two livestock centers and pledged my support to help move this work program forward.

While it is important to look at ways of further streamlining by inter-center cooperation on particular activities, I am not convinced it is appropriate to consider additional restructuring of the system at this time for two reasons.

First, the rationale that starts and drives many of these scenarios is the presumed necessity of reducing the funding available to the CGIAR to some arbitrarily determined level without relation to
the research agenda that this funding is intended to support. To repeat, I believe very strongly that the research agenda should drive the system and not vice versa. I hope you will agree with this premise and work with me to turn things around.

Second, we have not seen or assessed the experience of the two mergers that are now underway. We do not yet know the full measure of the impact such reorganizations have on the scientists in the centers concerned. That must be our first concern. I would, therefore, propose that such scenarios be suspended until we have good reason, in terms of the scientific agenda and the efficiency of pursuing it, that would dictate that we revisit this question.

Concerning the management and administration question, there are studies underway concerning other efficiency measures that can be introduced on a systemic basis. I have no doubt the centers have independently introduced efficiency and tightened management in their operations. What remains is to promote inter-enter concerns and seek systemwide efficiencies. This will make the CGIAR system function as more than a collection of independent centers and create a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. We must encourage development of effective systemwide programs, such as the management of genetic resources or water issues or the use of consortia and partnerships both within the CGIAR centers and with others from the developed and developing worlds, including national agricultural research systems, non-government organizations, and other groups.

Every effort must be made to increase efficiency and effectiveness throughout the system. A number of measures intended to tighten management and increase efficiency will be considered, and I hope adopted, at this meeting. Efficiency and effectiveness must be the watchwords of the CGIAR and must be an integral part of the signal we send out throughout the system.

Governance questions were only partially addressed by the creation of the Oversight and Finance Committees. This was an important but modest start. We must acknowledge that much remains to be done. The relationship among the two committees and the donors; the links among various stakeholders, including developing country representatives, secretariats and the centers; the autonomy of the centers, the independence of the TAC, and how to guarantee these; and the way to introduce systematic decision-making and transparency, accountability and predictability in the funding of programs, are all extremely important questions. Without addressing them, it is difficult to deal with many other aspects of the system. They are on our agenda for this meeting, and I look forward to a lively discussion in the days ahead.

Clearly, these three aspects of restructuring, governance, and management and administration are intertwined. All interact with the financing mechanisms we will put in place. For example, it will be necessary to clarify that while donors will be funding programs rather than centers, the programs are executed by centers. Programs do not exist as a disembodied set of activities. To become real they must be implemented by entities, in our case the centers. A matrix approach that relates programs across centers would be a first step in ensuring clarity and inter-center cooperation without unnecessary duplication and overlaps.
Focussing The Agenda

While impressive work has been done to focus the CGIAR agenda more sharply than before, allow me to make a few comments without prejudging the outcomes of our discussions. These observations are advanced because of my belief that the system should be driven by the research agenda.

My starting point is that the CGIAR is not working alone. While noting what others are doing, it should be undertaking research that it alone can do well, or for which it has a distinct comparative advantage. That would put the bulk of the system's work squarely in the strategic and applied parts of the continuum -- basic, strategic, applied, and adaptive research -- with NARS straddling the applied and adaptive parts, and some, such as India, China, Brazil, going well into the strategic.

The second criterion I believe necessary to help define the agenda is that the nature of the research should be focused on what one could term the international public good aspects of the research topics. What can be funded and undertaken by the private sector should be left to them. Likewise, topics of national importance that do not have international relevance should be left to national institutions.

And what then should the research agenda focus on? The focus on hunger and food security remains paramount. We will have another billion people on the globe within a decade, but with no opportunity to expand agricultural and irrigable land at anything resembling the rates as before. This leads to the need to maintain and increase the productivity of land and water resources with less reliance on fertilizers and pesticides. This will also require diversification of crop varieties and adaptability to different ecological zones. Current thinking is that biotechnology is a priority area for CGIAR focus. In part, it promises major contributions, either in terms of accelerated breeding through gene marking or through transgenic breeding actually achieving direct DNA manipulation. It is an area where the CGIAR's comparative advantage vis-a-vis the NARS, in translating cutting edge Western and Japanese university work to agricultural research of concern to the poor is clear, and where the complementarity between the CGIAR's work and that of the NARS will remain high.

In the ecoregional zones it seems clear we will need to keep a balance among Africa, West Asia and North Africa, Asia (WANA), and Latin America. On balance, more work will have to be done on Africa pending a significant strengthening of the African NARS working with other groups such as the Special Program for African Agricultural Research (SPAAR). The work in Asia, WANA, Latin America and elsewhere must be carefully calibrated to the specific comparative advantage of the CGIAR vis-a-vis the national agricultural research systems to maximize complementarity and synergy through networking of research programs.

Special questions have been raised about the CGIAR's potential role in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. That is a question on our agenda in the next few days.

Research also includes policy research on institutional and socioeconomic issues. CGIAR research activities must link into the farming system studies and participatory community-based work done by NARS and NGOs. The role of women, problems of land tenure, and cultural dimensions, all these factors that affect the adaptation and adoption of technologies, cannot be ignored at any level of research. The voice of the poor, the end users of the research, must be heard, and not just that of our institutional interlocutors, the NARS, important as they must remain.
The biotechnology area is also related to the tremendous achievement of the CGIAR in building up the genetic resource banks that now include some 600,000 samples held in trusteeship for humanity. This will require us to play a role in the clarification of the new statutes that will evolve over the next few years as the implications of the Biodiversity Convention and the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) agreements on intellectual property rights are factored into the visions of national legislations and the three are brought into harmony.

Clearly, there is merit in ensuring that the availability of germplasm for the NARS and the resulting applications at the farm level are not impeded from reaching the poor of the world. Maintaining and expanding this invaluable resource and improving our understanding of its scope and potential is a service that the CGIAR must continue to pursue as an integral part of its mandate.

We must deal with the water scarcity issue. I do not believe our current work on water globally -- not just by the CGIAR -- is adequate to solve what is likely to be the major problem facing large parts of humanity in the first decade of the next century. For the CGIAR, it is a central part of natural resource management and should figure more prominently in the work programs of ecoregional centers and should be better linked to the work of the International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI).

Revisions and fine-tunings of work programs in efficient management of natural resources, including soils and nutrients, as well as special ecosystems such as forests, is currently underway. It is in this context that the CGIAR’s mandate to assist in the implementation of Agenda 21 will be most evident.

Given the CGIAR funding crisis, this appears to me to be the proper thrust of the sharply focused work program. Nevertheless, if one can look beyond the current funding crisis, at least two areas of emphasis should be considered, given the tremendous international importance and the global nature that make them particularly difficult for national research programs to handle and particularly suited for an international system such as the CGIAR to address. These are aquatic and marine resources and coastal zones.

These areas are not being proposed for considerable expansion under the present circumstances, certainly not until the funding of the CGIAR is stabilized and put onto a sounder footing. Some progress, although insufficient, is being made on aquaculture. Marine resources are not adequately addressed globally. The current International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM) program remains quite modest.

I am always struck by the fact that only in the case of the sea are we still hunters and gatherers. The results of this short-sighted approach are seen in declining fish stocks and ever more expensive but declining catches, while fish farming and aquaculture account for a small fraction of global fisheries resources. In all other areas of human nutrition, we rely on farming approaches. The absence of aquaculture from the food equation is even more surprising when we recognize that marine animals have a very large reproductive capacity and that some 70 percent of world’s population lives within 150 miles of the sea. Related to this point, the coastal zones represent a special ecoregional challenge in terms of natural resource management, which will be extremely important if fish farming and aquaculture take off in a big way.

These observations about the agenda are not really at odds with adopting an agenda not very different from the TAC-recommended and donor-adopted agenda that was costed at some $270
They are, in fact, in broad accord with the observations of a number of distinguished external reviewers, including the Blake Committee, the SAREC Committee, and the Conway Panel. They are in harmony with work being done by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on the 2020 project. This convergence of views gives me comfort to think we can reach agreement on a core agenda that must govern our funding and guide our work programs and the activities of the centers.

A Vision of the Future

The renewal of the CGIAR requires a definition of a vision of what the system can and should be. It must place the CGIAR in the context of an evolving worldwide system, spanning from the most advanced centers of pure research to the application work being done by modest NGOs working with individual small farmers. That vision should involve a statement about the goals and objectives of the system, an idea of its place in the spectrum of others dealing with agricultural research worldwide, its links with the NARS and, through them, to the extension systems and to the farmers who are our ultimate clients. It would define the key elements of the research agenda that would govern the CGIAR's work for the next few years and carry us into the next millennium. It must also reaffirm the system's role in protecting genetic resources and promoting biodiversity. As a trustee for humanity, the CGIAR's publicly maintained and publicly accessible collections are an invaluable asset that must be preserved and enhanced.

The vision must also address the structure and governance of the system. It must provide comprehensible rules for funding the work program through the centers that will be transparent, predictable, and provide a basis for accountability of both donors and centers for the provision and use of the funds.

This vision must be elaborated in the next few months on the basis of a broad consensus among the stakeholders of the CGIAR, including developing country representatives. The system's three cosponsors must be fully committed to it. It must then be submitted to the highest authorities of the donors and agencies represented here. Their endorsement and support of such a vision would become the basis for a renewed commitment to the CGIAR and the basis of its renovation.

We need to recapture the spirit of Bellagio and to relaunch the renewed CGIAR with the full support of both donors and stakeholders at the highest levels.

IV. A Timetable for Action

The stabilization of CGIAR finances in 1994/95 is necessary to implement renewal of the system. I envisage the following timetable over the next 18 months:

- At this New Delhi Mid-Term Meeting (May 1994), develop a shared vision among the donors on how to build a more effective system that is funded in a predictable and sustainable fashion.
- Follow-up on the consolidation and elaboration of the proposals adopted (Summer 1994).
• Formally adopt the proposals to be submitted to donor authorities for their consideration (ICW94).

• Invite a high level special meeting to engage donors in the future directions for the CGIAR (November 1994).

• High-level special meeting (late January/early February 1995).

• Definition of needed changes and instruments (Spring 1995).

• Adopt the detailed changes and instruments (MTM95).

• Action in capitals and ratification if needed (Summer 1995).

• Final adoption of new programs, structures and procedures (ICW95).

This will enable us to launch the renowned CGIAR effectively from January 1996. But to start the renewal process the first step is committing ourselves here and now to the principles that should guide the process of governance and financial renewal, and to affirm our financial support to the basic research agenda and trigger the arrangements that will stabilize the finances of the CGIAR during the 1994/95 period. We should not leave here without that firm commitment and that unambiguous signal to the system.

The rest of the steps will require much hard work over the next 18 months. I can promise you, however, that you will find the Bank a constant partner in this task and me personally a committed advocate and tireless campaigner for the reform of the system and for the support of the reformed system.

V. ENVOI

So, my friends, let us go forth in these days of decision with determination to set aside small issues in the interest of the larger good. A consensus will inevitably require that each of us gives a little at the margin to secure the broad base of agreement necessary to translate our ideas to reality. The system’s finances need to be stabilized, its governance and operations reformed. The vision that guides its role and mandate into the next century must be clarified and the international support for its mission renewed.

We are at the crossroads, and it is incumbent upon us to act. We must act not to save a bureaucratic structure, not to stabilize an instrument of our policy, not even to save the centers of excellence of the CGIAR and to strengthen the national systems of research and extension that I have given such a broad commitment to help. We must act now for the poor and the hungry of the world and for the children of the poor and the marginalized of today who will be the hungry a decade from now if we do not act now. We must act for that tide of humanity that must eke out a meager and precarious living from fragile resources. We must act now......
There is a tide in the affairs of men which
taken at the flood leads on to fortune
Omitted, all the voyage of their lives
is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat
and we must take the current when it serves
or lose our ventures.

Thank you.
SUMMARY REPORT OF A WORKSHOP ON
THE IMPROVEMENT OF RAINFED FARMING IN ASIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 21 AND 22, 1994

PURPOSE

At ICW93 the CGIAR emphasized the need for the international agricultural research centers to cultivate wider partnerships, particularly in the context of implementing the ecoregional approach to research and its emphasis on sustained improvement in the productivity of natural resources.

The Oversight Committee accepted the responsibility for organizing a workshop in association with the 1994 Mid-Term Meeting. Mr. V. L. Chopra, a member of the committee, took the lead in its programming and organization. The workshop’s purpose was to widen the dialogue between the CGIAR and its potential partners, particularly the national agricultural research systems (NARS) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The specific aim of the workshop was to raise awareness among current and potential partners in the Asian region of the congruity of their missions, the complementarity of their roles and skills, and of the logic in forging partnerships to increase their effectiveness and efficiency in reaching common goals.

PROGRAM

The workshop, chaired by A. Z. M. Obaidullah Khan, FAO Representative for the Asia and Pacific Region, was organized around the theme:

"The Improvement of Rainfed Farming in Asia: Scope for Collaboration between National and International Partners."

It was opened by an overview of the issues of partnership and development by Obaidullah Khan, followed by an NGO perspective from Rene Salazar on the issues surrounding the improvement of dryland farming. He emphasized the importance of maintaining social cohesion and community integrity while seeking sustainable improvements in productivity.

Two case studies, one from an NGO and one from a NARS, provided hands-on examples of dryland farming improvement. At the heart of the workshop were three working groups in which the case studies and other experiences were brought to bear on themes seen as important to successful dryland research and development.
**ANNEX III**

**CASE STUDIES**

*The NGO Case Study*

The NGO case study came from Nepal. It featured the efforts of a farmer and CARE, an internationally supported NGO, in partnership with the Ministry of Forestry, to transform the productivity and sustainability of his farm in the Himalayas. It showed the subsequent interest from other farmers within the community, in other communities, and eventually across Nepal.

The case study illustrated the importance of the farmer’s perspective on his own problems and the options appropriate to their solution in his particular circumstances. It demonstrated how grassroots efforts could transform hillside farming, and emphasized the use of local resources where market access is limited.

*The NARS Case Study*

The NARS case study came from Karnataka in southern India. It brought together the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore; the Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA) Hyderabad; ICAR; and ICRISAT as an international center. It elaborated a national policy focus on dryland degradation, leading to products to improve dryland farming and to coalitions among institutions in different ministries, to implement these projects.

It illustrated the national perspective on priorities and the need to integrate the efforts of different line ministries, particularly in solving problems of the natural resource base.

**THEMES**

The working groups focused on three themes identified as important to the successful improvement of Asian dryland farming:

- Chaired by Rene Salazar -- Technology Relevance: Reconciling the needs of men and women with the needs for increased production and sound management of natural resources.

- Chaired by Kamla Chowdhry -- Peoples Participation: The implications for national and international policies.

- Chaired by Selcuk Ozgediz -- Institutional Complementarity and Collaboration.

Each working group was mandated to define why its theme was important to Asian dryland agriculture, what factors inhibited use of the theme in research and development efforts, and what changes were needed to remove these inhibitions. Each group presented its conclusions in a final plenary session and Obaidullah Khan summarized these conclusions in his closing remarks.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The working group on Technology Relevance highlighted the level of scarce resources spent on research programs which produced technologies not subsequently taken up by farmers. The group used this theme to stress the importance of technology relevance, emphasizing that the farmer, man
and woman, is always the final arbiter on whether or not new technologies will be useful. Even where benefits are anticipated for the urban poor some farmer somewhere has to take the initiative in using the new material or methods.

This fact places heavy emphasis on the need for a technology development process in which the circumstances under which farmers operate - natural, economic and cultural - guide the design of solutions to their priority problems. This in turn demands an understanding of farmers’ circumstances as a basis for the choice of a research agenda and for the planning of adaptive experiments to shape the technologies to their situation.

Initial discussion in the working group on Peoples Participation focussed on participation as a means for empowerment or as a feedback mechanism. It concluded the two were interdependent - empowerment allowed feedback and feedback enhanced empowerment. It also concluded that participation by farmers in the research process was the most effective way of bringing knowledge of their circumstances to bear on the choice of technology and on the shaping of solutions to their problems.

The group emphasized that farmer participation in the research process required a compromise on conventional experimental techniques and that this should be viewed as a shift in the research paradigm and not a loss of science. The group expressed conviction that the improvement in relevance more than compensated for the sacrifice in statistical rigor. The earlier farmers are involved in the research process the greater the probability of relevant output.

The group recognized that achieving a partnership between small farmers and science required a deliberate effort to organize farmers to enable them to articulate their needs. This demands a shift in the attitude of the official establishment which needs to recognize first, that farmers do their own research, second, they are the best source of knowledge about their own environment, and third, it is this environment in which the products of science must function.

Such recognition seems to be a necessary precursor to changes in research procedures and organization which encourage partnership with farmers as the ultimate and only beneficiaries for public research. The group concluded that international centers should play a catalytic role in promoting such partnerships, in developing research methods to enhance them, and in training national research scientists to participate in them.

The working group on Institutional Complementarity and Collaboration drew attention to the increasing globalization of issues and the interdependence of regions, countries and people; and the principle of subsidiarity, devolving roles and responsibilities to the level -- global, regional, national and local -- which does them best.

The group identified a growing convergence of a range of institutions towards common goals for research and development, yet a continuing suspicion of motives due to varying historical perspectives on the common problem. It strongly emphasized the complementarity of roles:

- international agricultural research, logically addressing strategic research problems which affect the resource poor in a wide range of countries;
ANNEX III

- national agricultural research systems, as an instrument of national policy, focus on those issues and those regions which are government priorities for the future of the country; and

- local non-governmental organizations building a close interface with resource poor communities and farmers, well equipped to help them articulate their needs.

The Group stressed that the environmental heterogeneity of the dryland areas demanded strong local, national and international linkages to forge an effective and efficient research and development process to bring improved welfare to people, increased production to the market and the sound management of natural resources.

In summing up Obaidullah Khan acknowledged that linkage mechanisms were well known and readily available. Most needed was an attitude in international centers, national systems and among NGOs recognizing the common mission and the role of the other institutions, as well as their own, in achieving it. This was the prerequisite for effective use of the available linkage mechanisms.
# LIST OF DOCUMENTS

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A Workshop on the Improvement of Asian Rainfed Agriculture Scope for Enhanced Collaboration between National and International Partners -- Opening Statement of the Workshop Chair
ANNEX V

MID-TERM MEETING, MAY 23 - 27, 1994
NEW DELHI, INDIA

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairman

Ismail Serageldin
Vice President
Environmentally Sustainable Development
The World Bank
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