FROM: The Secretariat

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Concept of "Associate Status"

Introduction

1. There are several agricultural research activities which, though not sponsored by the CGIAR or funded by it, are sometimes thought to have some special relationship to it. The Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center (AVRDC), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) are examples. At the discussion in September on the relationship between the CGIAR and the International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), it was clear that some members, and ICIPE itself, hoped it might be accorded some kind of "associate status". Beyond these four, there will be other centers or activities which will seek, or whose sponsors will seek on their behalf, some kind of recognition by the Group. It will, therefore, soon become pressing to formulate a policy on what may, for the sake of convenience, be called "associate status", a term often used but as yet neither officially sanctioned nor defined.

Background

2. Before considering what might justify some such special relationship with the CGIAR, it would be useful to set out what accords a center or activity official status as part of the CGIAR system. The key thing is that it is officially sponsored by the Group and (except for WARDA, which is something of a special case) the Group accepts that its core program shall be fully funded by donor members of the Group, usually by a substantial proportion of them. It enters into a relationship with the Group in which each party has customary (if not legal) rights and obligations. The center goes through an admission procedure involving appraisal by TAC and acceptance by the Group and it is obliged to present its program and budget to the Group in a prescribed form and to submit to scrutiny by the Group at regular intervals. In return it has the right to expect that it will enjoy the support of the Group and that its justified financial needs will be met by members of the Group. On their side, the donor members accept responsibility for funding the center and have the right to expect that their views on the mandate, program and operation of the center will be taken into account.

Distribution:

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3. Research institutions which have not been officially adopted by the Group do not have such rights or obligations. If the four mentioned above have a special relationship with the Group, it stems from other things. AVRDC is cast in the same mold as the sponsored centers and were it not for its politically sensitive location might well have been sponsored by the Group. Being of the same character as the sponsored centers, and working on crops accorded priority by TAC, it has, from the beginning, been invited to present its program to the Group during Centers Week, and its Director has been invited by the Directors of the sponsored centers to participate fully in their regular meetings. Its program and budget are not reviewed by the Group, but, on its own initiative, it has made its annual program and budget paper available to members.

4. The idea of an international institute to conduct research on food policy was considered by TAC, found to have merit, and recommended by TAC to the Consultative Group. The Group, however, declined to sponsor such an institute and IFPRI was subsequently established and funded outside the CGIAR by several interested donors. Again, because of its relevance to the objectives of the Group and the work of the IARCs, it was agreed that the Group would wish to maintain an effective communications link with IFPRI, and to that end IFPRI has been regularly invited to speak about its program at Centers Week.

5. IFDC presents another case. Unlike AVRDC, it is different in character from the sponsored centers in that it is concerned with a single factor of production — fertilizer — rather than crops. This in itself raises a question of policy for the Group, which has not, as yet, addressed the question of whether there is need to sponsor, as part of the CGIAR system, research centers concerned with factors of production rather than crop production itself. However, the location of IFDC in a major donor country has clouded its acceptability by the Group. For both these reasons, and because the United States was willing to fund IFDC's core program during its early years, TAC was hesitant to recommend it as a sponsored center, but because of its importance to the work of the centers in the CG system, the Chairman of TAC recommended that they have a continuous relationship with IFDC. Consequently, IFDC was invited to keep the CGIAR regularly informed of its program, and to that end to make its annual program and budget paper available to the Group and to have its Director present at Centers Week to speak to it. Its Director was also invited by the Center Directors to attend their regular meetings (but not their executive sessions). Subsequently, and in a separate action, the Consultative Group agreed to take on responsibility to nominate candidates for membership of IFDC's Board of Trustees, thereby helping to satisfy legal requirements for granting IFDC international status under United States law.
6. Through these various informal links the Consultative Group has arranged to make it possible for the sponsored centers and the Group itself to benefit from being kept regularly informed of research activities closely related to the research of the sponsored centers without becoming responsible for funding these related research efforts. Nor has the Group undertaken to review the budgets and programs (and the scientific quality of the programs) of these institutions so as to certify their continuing merit for financial support, as is done for the sponsored centers.

7. The Group's discussion in September on ICIPE explored further the nature of a possible special relationship. While the consensus of the Group was that ICIPE should not be sponsored, adopted and fully funded by the Group like the centers already in the CG system, it was appreciated that ICIPE had potential for furthering the objectives of the Group in its collaboration with the sponsored centers, and consequently that the funding of such collaborative programs and review of their scientific merit should be covered under existing arrangements for funding and reviewing the core programs of the sponsored centers. Moreover, it was agreed that the Secretariat could use its good offices to help ICIPE in obtaining financial support from donors acting outside the CGIAR. At the same time, it was agreed that ICIPE's full program and budget would not be subject to the normal CGIAR review process except as scrutiny of the collaborative programs required. The question of whether ICIPE should be invited to present its program at Centers Week was not considered.

8. Special relationships thus continue to evolve and proliferate. The sponsors of the new International Council for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) have already asked that it be granted "associate status". Others may be in the offing, for recognition by the CGIAR in some form can benefit a research effort. Some institutions not part of the CG system (or their sponsors on their behalf) have sought to have their programs appraised by TAC, though not seeking funding through the CGIAR. The motive has been to receive what amounts in effect to a certificate of merit from TAC which will facilitate raising funds outside CGIAR arrangements. Other institutions look for recognition not just by TAC, but by the Group itself.

Present Position

9. The Group has never addressed specifically the question of whether to give official recognition to research efforts not fully sponsored and funded by it. The present practices amount to a policy of giving unofficial, informal, ad hoc recognition to certain activities which the Group wishes to encourage, but does not wish to sponsor officially. As a first step in consideration of this subject by the Group, this paper is provided as a means of airing the options and implications.
Basic Options

10. The Group has three basic options. It can leave things as they are and continue to deal with each new situation ad hoc. An alternative would be for it to move toward a more restrictive policy of recognizing only the officially sponsored activities and treating all others as outside the CGIAR's purview. Or it can move in the other direction toward a policy of giving official recognition to a class of activities which, though not fully funded by the CGIAR, are to some degree accredited by it.

11. Some might consider that it is advantageous to the Group not to look too deeply into the question of associate status, but just to allow the present informal practices to continue and thereby tacitly accept situations which some members might prefer not to have to address openly. This approach allows each member to interpret for itself the official significance of each case. While the Group as a whole could adopt this approach, members will appreciate that it leaves the Group's services -- the Secretariat and TAC -- with little guidance on how to proceed when pressure arises to accord recognition to a particular enterprise.

12. If the Group wishes to be more restrictive, it would not be difficult to phase out the present practices and institute new ones which would accord no special recognition to institutions or activities not fully sponsored and funded by the Group, but would leave it open to invite the representatives of particular institutions to report to the Group from time to time, and open to the sponsored centers to enter into whatever relationships with them seemed mutually advantageous. If, however, the Group wishes to adopt the third option and establish some kind of associate status, it will wish to consider the implications for the Group, the sponsored centers, and the Group's services.

Implications of Change

13. The first implication of making a change is the need to define the criteria for eligibility for associate status, the kinds of obligations which would accrue to both the associate and the Group, and the forms of associate status which would suit the CGIAR's purposes.

14. There could be several forms or types of associate status. However, it would seem essential that any associate would have to meet at least the following criteria:

(i) that it be international in character with international governance and internationally recruited staff;
that it be engaged in research related to agriculture, with objectives and mandate consistent with those of the CGIAR as a whole and the international centers and programs supported by the Group;

(iii) that it have proven scientific competence up to the standards, as determined by TAC, of those sponsored by the Group;

(iv) that it be supported financially by several members of the Consultative Group; and

(v) that granting it associate status would facilitate the achievement of the Group's objectives and add to the effectiveness of the system it supports.

15. Granting associate status would imply certain obligations on both the Group and its services -- TAC and the Secretariats -- and on the associated institution. These might vary with the type of association, but would seem to require periodic review of programs and evaluation of scientific performance and, in addition, submission, with respect to programs being partially funded, to regular program and budget review procedures similar to those required of sponsored centers. Furthermore, there would probably have to be a satisfactory, if less searching, periodic appraisal of the overall program and finances. The Group might also wish to have rights similar to those enjoyed with respect to sponsored centers, such as the right to name members of the Board of Trustees. The associate institution might not have rights so much as opportunities -- the opportunity to put its program before the Group and, by meeting with donors and other centers at Centers Week, to facilitate coordination of its program with the programs of others and its funding among donors.

16. Provided the minimum conditions were met and the Group wished to grant associate status to a particular institution, the association could take several forms. The basic distinction would seem to be between those associated activities drawing direct or indirect financial support through the CGIAR, and those which are associated without any financial links to the Group.

(a) **Associate Status with Program Support**

The Group might wish to support only a portion of the overall program of an institution. It would not obligate itself to finance the full core program, and would not expect to review and approve those other aspects of the organization's activities not funded by the Group. This form of relationship already exists in the case of WARDA. It could also apply to an
institution, such as ICIPE, if an important part of its program comprised collaborative programs with sponsored centers and these programs were funded by the Group. With respect to the funded programs, the obligations and rights of the Group and the institution would be similar to those obtaining for sponsored institutions.

(b) **Associate Status without Funding**

Should the Group so wish, associate status without funding could be granted to an institution which the Group finds meets the minimum conditions of relevance, competence, international character, source of support, and benefit to the CGIAR. The granting of such status would imply a judgment by the Group that the enterprise is worthy of international support, although for various reasons not through the mechanism of the CGIAR. It would recognize that associate status might confer benefits upon the associated institution which it would not otherwise enjoy, and thus both the CGIAR and associated institution would gain through the relationship.

17. As mentioned above, there is a more limited kind of relationship sought when an institution wishes to be appraised by TAC for purposes of accreditation but not for funding by the CGIAR. For present purposes it is assumed that such institutions would also seek associate status and thus would be covered in the foregoing discussion. If, however, this were not the case, the Group would have to consider whether TAC, which was established to serve the Group, could take on the added function of assessor of institutions which did not necessarily seek any more than TAC's certificate of merit.

Possible Advantages

18. In considering whether to create associate status the first question is whether the Group and its system would be benefitted. The raison d'être of the Group is to hasten the expansion of food production in the developing countries through organizing and supporting a network of international production-oriented research centers and activities. Will this effort be strengthened by adding to the network a group of "associated" institutions?

19. An objective of the CGIAR is to help ensure maximum complementarity among research efforts and to encourage full information exchange. A number of internationally supported research efforts are of direct interest to the Group and the sponsored centers, even though by virtue of location, research orientation or other reasons they are not themselves
sponsored. If associate status were to carry certain obligations to report and consult, it could enhance the Group's ability to ensure efficient use of resources for research and complementarity of efforts. It might also enable donors to gain a more comprehensive view of their priorities for funding research related to agriculture as a whole in the developing countries.

20. Another objective of the CGIAR is to consider how best to meet gaps in agricultural research. The typical response has been the creation of the international agricultural research center whose core research program is fully funded by the CGIAR. There may be advantages in arrangements more flexible than full scale support for a major research center subject to continuing scrutiny by the Group. The Group might wish, for example, to sponsor and support only part of an institute's total activity, in which case sponsorship of the institute as a whole might not be warranted or required. A special relationship such as associate status could be a convenience to the Group in such situations.

21. Also, there may be activities different in character from those now sponsored, or experimental in nature, which might eventually be candidates for support by the Group. In such cases it might be advantageous for the Group to enter into a relationship with the institute or activity which would keep the Group informed and would provide it with the means of exercising some influence over the development of the program.

22. Associate status for purposes of accreditation without funding might be a fourth advantage. It might well benefit the institution concerned, particularly in raising funds, and the process of accreditation might make it easier for donors to provide funding outside the normal CGIAR arrangements. There are, however, possible disadvantages, which are discussed below.

23. Finally, and most importantly, is the question whether the establishment of associate status would have the advantage of increasing the resources devoted to international agricultural research. The CGIAR has proved an effective mechanism for marshalling resources for a select array of research centers of excellence. Each year new donors have joined the Group and most old donors have increased their level of contribution. Donors have been attracted to it not only because of its obviously worthy purpose, but because it affords some assurance that the resources channeled through it will be used effectively on programs which the Group has means of evaluating and monitoring. Probably the existence of the CGIAR has generated resources which are additional to the resources which would have been available if it did not exist, but even if this were not so, it can be said that with fairly sharply focused programs, high quality staff, and good management, the sponsored centers have been able to assure the donors that their resources are used notably effectively.

24. Clearly, institutions seeking association with the CGIAR would hope to gain easier access to funds by virtue of being associated with a
system which has proved attractive to donors. There is good prospect they would do so. A fundamentally important question for the Group is whether the accretion to the system of associated institutions will tend to generate additional resources applied to the Group's overall purposes or will merely distribute more widely the resources otherwise likely to be available for the sponsored centers and programs. As things stand, donors are providing almost $100 million for sponsored institutions and some of the same donors are already providing, or expect to provide, a further amount for activities which already have some kind of special relationship with the CGIAR or would hope to have one in the future. Taking sponsored activities and those with a present or potential special relationship together, if donors would provide more funds for international research if a class of institution with associate status were created, then, as far as marshalling resources is concerned, there would be some advantage in creating it.

Disadvantages

25. There is, however, some risk that the addition of associates to the CG system would not produce more resources but merely spread more thinly the resources available. The question of whether the creation of a class of institutions with associate status will be advantageous or disadvantageous in obtaining resources for the general purposes of the Group is one which can only be answered in the first instance by each donor speaking for itself in its particular circumstances.

26. A clear disadvantage is the added burden on the Group and its services. The present network of international centers already absorbs a good deal of attention on the part of the CG and stretches its services, TAC and the Secretariats. Adoption of new associate activities, or granting certificates of merit, would substantially increase the workload of the Group, especially as review and scrutiny of the activities concerned would have to be a regular continuing task. To maintain the standards and reputation of the present network and of the Group as a whole, potential associate members or recipients of certificates would not only need to be considered carefully initially, but reviewed periodically to ensure that these standards were being maintained. The grant of associate status or a certificate of merit could not be assumed to remain valid indefinitely.

27. Creation of an official associate status would be in some respects a step away from the informal, unbureaucratic nature of the Group. It would require establishing procedures for considering applicants and possibly for classifying them for different purposes. It would impose certain obligations on organizations even if they are not funded by the Group, and there would have to be some procedure to see that the obligations were met. There are already about a dozen activities operating in the field of international agricultural research outside the CG. If all were to seek associate status, the CGIAR system with a core of sponsored entities and a ring of associated activities would begin to be more unwieldy than could be efficiently managed under the Group's existing informal arrangements.
28. The success of the CGIAR in marshalling resources and organizing a system for agricultural research has given it a prominence which contains the risk that it may be thought to have a monopoly in this field. The CGIAR does not purport to be the only institution supporting international agricultural research and it would be unfortunate if the belief prevailed that only those activities recognized by the Group (officially or otherwise) were worthy of support. Because of the existence and success of the CGIAR there is a danger that donors will increasingly tend to confine their funds to activities seen to be related to the system supported by the CGIAR. The creation of a class of activities with "associate status" could increase this tendency and aggravate a problem which already exists.

Conclusions and Recommendation

30. The concept of associate status and the desirability of using such a designation to grant official recognition or accreditation is a complex issue. Many separate interests are involved. While there is a need to decide before long what policy to adopt, it would be wise to take time for full consideration of all the implications. TAC has already stated that it intends to consider the question at its next meeting in February. It is therefore recommended:

(a) That the issue be aired at the November 1977 meeting of the CGIAR, but no final decision be taken at that time.

(b) That TAC address the subject at its next meeting, taking into account the views expressed by members of the Group at its November meeting.

(c) That the Secretariat garner views from other interested parties, particularly the IARCs sponsored by the Group.

(d) That the Secretariat, in consultation with TAC and its Secretariat, prepare a definitive paper for the Group's consideration at its first meeting in 1978, and

(e) That meanwhile the Group adopt an interim policy to the effect that (i) no action be taken to make more formal existing practices of according recognition to certain institutions not officially sponsored by the Group, (ii) those institutions which have been regularly making presentations at Centers Week be invited to continue to do so, but biennially rather than annually, and (iii) no institution other than AVRDC, IFPRI and IFDC be so invited, but (iv) it should not be precluded that an institution of
particular relevance or interest to the Group should be invited to make a statement on its program at Centers Week on the understanding that the invitation is for that particular occasion only.