

# CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

1818 H St., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20433 U.S.A.

Telephone (Area Code 202) 477-3592

Cable Address - INTBAFRAD

To: Members of the Consultative Group

From: The Secretariat

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Subject: Co-ordination of Assistance for Post-Harvest Systems Research.

1. From time to time Members of the Consultative Group have expressed their concern that a significant proportion of food crops harvested is lost in storage, processing and distribution. At the request of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) provided TAC with a report on the need for research and technical assistance on post-harvest systems, particularly in the rice-producing nations of Asia. TAC considered this report and its recommendations and in his report to the Consultative Group at its Centers Week meeting last July, the Chairman of TAC commented on them. He said that TAC endorsed the IDRC's recommendations that no new institution dedicated to post-harvest research and development need be created, but rather that the CGIAR should encourage and promote an integration of effort among the various initiatives of CG Members in collaboration with IRRI and various national and regional research institutions of South and South East Asia. A group of Members interested in this subject had met informally earlier in the week and had recommended that they form a working party to co-ordinate their assistance for post-harvest systems research and development, initially for the countries of South and South East Asia, but subsequently for other regions. The Chairman of TAC noted this initiative and commended it.

2. Later in the meeting the representative of the IDRC reported further on this informal meeting and other members expressed their interest in coordination through the vehicle of such a working party. The point was also made that there was a great need for investment in storage, processing and distribution and that capital aid for this purpose also needed coordinating and might well be a matter for the new Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment. The representative of one Member suggested that this was such an important area of co-ordination that the CGIAR might wish to establish an official Committee to exercise this function. The Chairman of the Group said this was clearly an important activity which Members would wish to see pursued in whatever was the most effective way. Yet there was a general reluctance to see committees proliferate and Members might wish to have some general criteria for establishing new committees, particularly if they were likely to be permanent - or standing - committees. He proposed that the Secretariat explore with Members how they felt about it.

3. The Secretariat has explored the question with a representative number of Members. There is a strong feeling that research and development to overcome post-harvest losses is important and that bilateral aid for this and also for investment needs some coordination. Most, however, noted that TAC had not felt the need to institutionalize in any very formal way the work in this area and neither the IDRC nor TAC had seen any need for funds for research on this subject to be provided through the CGIAR. Many also

were reluctant to see a proliferation of committees.

4. The Secretariat believes most Members would wish to see some form of co-ordination of assistance for post-harvest systems research and development and that most would be content to have this done for the time being by the informal, unofficial working party of CGIAR Members already in being. The Secretariat found no basis for recommending any change in its status.