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CGIAR at a Glance: Working Together

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), established in 1971, is a strategic partnership of countries, international and regional organizations, and private foundations supporting the work of 15 international Centers. In collaboration with national agricultural research systems, civil society and the private sector, the CGIAR fosters sustainable agricultural growth by applying high-quality science to benefit the poor through stronger food security, better human nutrition and health, higher incomes, and improved management of natural resources. In 2006, CGIAR Members contributed US\$429 million — the world's single largest investment in generating public goods for the benefit of poor agricultural communities.

The CGIAR has five areas of focus:

- **SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION** of crops, livestock, fisheries, forests and natural resources;
- **ENHANCING NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SYSTEMS** through joint research, policy support, training and knowledge sharing;
- **GERMPLASM IMPROVEMENT** for priority crops, livestock, trees and fish;
- **GERMPLASM COLLECTION, CHARACTERIZATION AND CONSERVATION**, as the genetic resources that the CGIAR holds in public trust, and makes available to all, include some of the world's largest genebanks; and
- **POLICY RESEARCH** on matters that have a major impact on agriculture, food, health, disseminating new technologies, and managing and conserving natural resources.



Message from the Chair and Director – Power of Partnerships: Strength Through Renewal

Six years into its reform program, the Consultative Group at the heart of international agricultural research focuses on its many links with the scientific community, civil society, policymakers and the private sector

Partnerships for development — when they are genuine, coherent and focused — strengthen the partners involved, as well as their impact. This understanding of the power of partnerships drove the redesign of the CGIAR that commenced in 2001.

The changes were many and far-reaching. The Executive Council was restructured to enable shareholders and stakeholders to join together in energizing the decision-making processes. The Science Council came into being with a mandate to reach out to partners in the global science community and bring their collective wisdom to bear on CGIAR-supported research. A key objective of the new Challenge Programs was to offer additional opportunities for partnerships across the CGIAR System and beyond, with civil society organizations (CSOs), scientists, policymakers, nontraditional donors and the private sector. The CGIAR virtual System Office created a more effective partnership among the CGIAR System's service units.

Increasingly, in the years following the launch of the reform program, the significance of partnerships took hold as central to the way in which the CGIAR functioned, and new opportunities opened up for the CGIAR System to collaborate more closely and effectively than before with civil society. Linkages were enhanced with the private sector, too, through the CGIAR Private Sector Committee, which served as a conduit for a continuing exchange of ideas and experience, and as an instrument for developing innovative programs such as staff exchanges and knowledge sharing on research management.

With the reform program now in its sixth year, the effectiveness of research partnerships is the focus of this *CGIAR Annual Report 2006*. Reports from the Centers describe different kinds of partnerships among farmers, across regions, and between the private sector and CSOs — all, of course, involving CGIAR Centers. Each of these reports demonstrates the effectiveness of, and therefore the need for, partnerships as CGIAR Centers seek to continue building on the guiding principles of the reform program: efficiency, efficacy, transparency, accountability and participation.



CGIAR Chair Katherine Sierra and Director Francisco Reifschneider.

A specific aspect of partnerships was a highlight of the 2006 Annual General Meeting (AGM06), at which the Stakeholder Meeting segment took the form of a Civil Society-CGIAR Forum that reconfirmed the commitment of the CGIAR System to practical and effective forms of cooperation with CSOs. About 100 representatives of CSOs attended the forum, together with CGIAR Members, Center scientists and others. Its purpose was to review the state of relations between CSOs and the CGIAR, to assess strengths and weaknesses, and to plan for future collaboration that would enable CSOs and the CGIAR to work in harmony and so enhance their beneficial impacts on the lives of the poor, natural resource management and economic growth. A representative advisory group provided critical inputs to the CGIAR Secretariat over the several months that it planned and organized the forum. Preceding the forum was an online virtual conversation that ran for around 4 weeks. Over 150 people took part in this conversation, which enabled potential participants in the forum to exchange points of view beforehand, thereby creating for the forum a foundation of mutual understanding derived from shared interests. Another important feature of the forum was its accompanying Innovation Marketplace, which showcased some 50 existing CSO-CGIAR partnerships. In another first, conclusions reached at the forum were presented to the AGM Business Meeting.

These developments are heartening, but the somewhat rocky relations between the CGIAR and CSOs in the past allow no room for euphoria.

Although the CGIAR and CSOs have always shared compatible interests, periodic tensions have surfaced, and harmonization of effort has proved elusive. Nevertheless, the CGIAR and CSOs maintained mutual contacts and engaged in consultations on matters of common interest such as ensuring universal access to plant genetic resources, the impact of modern agriculture on the environment, intellectual property rights and international agreements that aim to protect the earth's biodiversity. Joint positions were formulated on some issues. Collaboration was evident at the practical or working level as well, as a survey identified hundreds of CSO-Center partnerships. Significant support for continued collaboration emerged at the CGIAR ministerial-level meeting held in Lucerne, Switzerland, in 1995. The Lucerne Declaration and Action Program urged the CGIAR "to convene a committee of nongovernmental organizations and a committee of the private sector as a means of improving dialogue among the CGIAR, the private sector, and members of civil society who are interested in the same issues as the CGIAR."

The upshots were the NGO Committee, the Private Sector Committee and a short-lived committee involving international science bodies. The NGO Committee fell dormant after some years and, in line with the findings of an external panel that reviewed CGIAR relationships with its partners, the Group decided to develop alternative models of CSO-CGIAR collaboration. A key feature of this new effort was its grounding on a strategic framework that defined the principles of engagement

as "giving voice to civil society stakeholders within the CGIAR to strengthen mutual learning and to enable the CGIAR to better shape its research agenda and implementation for the benefit of the poor."

The strategic framework declared that the overall goals of CGIAR engagement with CSOs were to

- improve research effectiveness and impact for development,
- bring innovative ideas and new perspectives to CGIAR research challenges, and
- exemplify public accountability and transparency through global public fora.

Within that framework, CSOs and the CGIAR have explored the means of collaborating at different levels and in creative ways. (For the full text of the strategic framework paper, please see www.cgiar.org/csos/strategy_cso_cgiar_2007.pdf.) Following the Civil Society-CGIAR Forum, the CGIAR launched a competitive grants program to support innovative projects involving civil society partners and other stakeholders, promote partnerships between the CGIAR and CSOs, and create new avenues by which a growing network of CSO and CGIAR partners could continue to learn from one another by actively sharing knowledge. Over 150 concept notes were submitted, and grant agreements for the most promising four or five partnerships are expected to be signed in October 2007.

Many other avenues for partnerships with CSOs are being explored, including the creation of an



Internet portal and a site for interactive blogging. These activities make the most of a period of transition through which the CSO-CGIAR relationship can grow into a powerful instrument of research for development. This is part of a broader transition that took place in the CGIAR in the year under review, which was a year of transition for the CGIAR System itself. CGIAR Chair Ian Johnson (UK) ended his term in April 2006 and was succeeded in September by Katherine Sierra (USA). CGIAR Director Francisco J.B. Reifschneider (Brazil) prepared to leave office after more than 6 years, in the interest of creating space for renewal. The next director, Ren Wang (China), will assume office in mid-2007. Per Pinstrup-Andersen (Denmark), the first chair of the Science Council, ended his 3-year term and was succeeded by Rudy Rabbinge (Netherlands).

Meanwhile, for the first time in the history of the CGIAR, Members participated in a symposium on measures to ensure that approved System priorities are fully funded. This was followed — again, for the first time — by a symposium on alignment.

As these events unfold, CSO-CGIAR partnerships will continue to grow in strength, bringing the power of new perspectives and new approaches

to research for development into the CGIAR. We are confident that enhanced engagement with CSOs will enable the voice of the South to be heard more strongly than ever throughout the CGIAR System, with a positive impact on all the work we do.

Katherine Sierra
CGIAR Chair

Francisco J.B. Reifschneider
CGIAR Director

Science Council: The Past Is Prologue

To improve the options for scientific and technological collaboration available to the CGIAR, the Science Council's Standing Panel on Mobilizing Science has commissioned a study on CGIAR Centers' partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs). The results of the study are scheduled to be delivered in August 2007. They are expected to contribute to the CGIAR's renewed efforts to put CSO engagement in the mainstream of CGIAR processes, from setting the agenda and planning and implementing research, to evaluating the CGIAR's impact on food security, welfare and development in rural communities.

The study is expected to establish a foundation for Centers' decision-making concerning present and future partnerships with CSOs. It will be based on six case studies of Centers' ongoing partnerships with CSOs that focus on agricultural science and technology. Case studies were selected with the aim of achieving a balance between partners that are nongovernmental organizations on the one hand and farmer organizations on the other. A balance was also sought between partnerships focusing on upstream research and those engaged in the delivery of Centers' outputs.

Demand for a study on CGIAR Centers' partnerships with CSOs originated in a special ministerial meeting in February 1995 in Lucerne, Switzerland. At the meeting, mutually beneficial linkages between the CGIAR and civil society were formally recognized as being critical imperatives to a fully effective CGIAR System. Furthermore, results from a CGIAR Center collaboration survey completed in 2005 suggest that, although roughly 560 of Centers' collaborators (17%) are CSOs, Centers rarely mention these collaborations as being highly relevant. The study aims to shed light on this paradox and, ultimately, to contribute to improving the relevance and success of partnerships between CGIAR Centers and CSOs. It will document the experiences provided by Center-CSO partnerships, including CSOs' points of view, and highlight how and why these partnerships are important for mobilizing science and fulfilling the CGIAR mandate. In addition, it will identify and disseminate the lessons learned from these partnership experiences and attempt to arrive at a better understanding of the factors behind successes and failures.

The study is expected to help bring about the development of a CGIAR policy to strengthen impact and relations with CSOs and ultimately to guide the evolution of ways of working in the CGIAR.

Priorities and strategies. Following the endorsement in 2005 of CGIAR System research priorities focusing on problems for which the CGIAR is likely to have the greatest impact, the attention of the Science Council turned in 2006 to aligning the research portfolio to implement these priorities within 3 years. In addition, the Science Council has been involved in strategic studies to, for example, develop a strategy for genomics research in the CGIAR, define opportunities for handling intellectual property in regard to international public goods, and clarify the relationship of ethics and CGIAR research.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Following the new approach to make the M&E of CGIAR Centers more streamlined and cost-effective, several external reviews were completed in 2006. These include a follow-up review of the recent external program and management review (EPMR) of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center and the finalization of EPMRs of the Center for International Forestry Research, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, International Livestock Research Institute, International Water Management Institute, World Agroforestry Centre and WorldFish Center. EPMRs of the Africa Rice Center, International Center for Tropical Agriculture, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture and International Potato Center were commissioned in 2006 for implementation in 2007, as were external reviews for the Challenge Program on Water and Food and the HarvestPlus Challenge Program.

A review and impact assessment of training activities in the CGIAR was completed early in 2006. The study analyzed training information and data for the period 1990-2004; interviewed stakeholders and Center staff in three regions; surveyed ex-trainees, CGIAR researchers and research partners; and included a summary analysis of evaluations and impact assessment conducted by the Centers themselves. One key finding was that, although the shift to project funding has diminished the longer-term commitment to formal training in Centers, collaborative research has brought an increase in capacity strengthening. Some Centers increased the number of short-term training events, including those targeting farmers. The training has in general been high quality and, judging by the perceptions of stakeholders, effective — but how much so depends on the strength of the national agricultural research systems (NARS) involved.

The report found that many Centers had no central node for coordinating training and that compiling

A study on research Centers' partnership experiences with civil society organizations aims to point the way toward expanded and more effective links



and accessing data was difficult. This limited the use of past experiences to design future activities. The findings of the report were consistent with the approach to training outlined in the CGIAR System priorities (mainly as capacity building within the research priorities), but it cautioned on the need for a mechanism to coordinate training within each Center. A key recommendation was that training should be formally and fully recognized as an indispensable component of CGIAR activities, both for strengthening NARS and for contributing to the execution of Center research. An important recommendation to Centers is that they increase inter-Center coordination and cooperation.

Impact assessment. A study of the impacts of CGIAR and partner research in sub-Saharan Africa was completed in 2006. Using meta-analysis to quantify aggregate economic benefits, the report finds total investments by the CGIAR and partners justified under a wide range of assumptions, provided that benefits continue at their reported levels beyond 2004. The aggregate

benefit-cost ratios under this scenario range between 1.12 and 1.64. Including only benefits reported up to 2004, the ratio falls below unity in one conservative scenario in which only “substantially demonstrated” benefits are counted. Under all scenarios, the vast majority of documented benefits stem from a limited range of activities, mostly biological control and, to a lesser extent, crop genetic improvement. The report shows that documented benefits well exceed total agricultural R&D investments in the region, but significant scope remains to document them better.

Rudy Rabbinge
Science Council Chair

Center Alliance: Gaining Depth

The 15 research Centers supported by the CGIAR ratified in April 2006 the Alliance Principles and Procedures, which include mechanisms for conflict resolution. Ratification was a watershed because decisions made by the Alliance of the CGIAR Centers are binding for all members.

The formal bodies of the Alliance are the Alliance Board, Alliance Executive, Alliance Deputy Executive (Science), Alliance Deputy Executive (Finance) and Alliance Office, the last of which is the facilitating agent for the work of the Alliance. The chairs of each body are elected by their constituency according to a transparent process. The chief alliance officer is based at the International Fund for Agricultural Development headquarters in Rome. The geographically dispersed Alliance Office functions by virtual means. Individual Alliance Office staff members are hired through an international or national search process and managed by their home Center on behalf of the Alliance. As each Center is a member of the Alliance, all Center staff members contributing to collective action among the Centers are also members of the Alliance.

Several specific accomplishments were achieved in 2006.

The regional plans for collective action in sub-Saharan Africa are now essentially developed, and the Alliance is discussing implementation mechanisms. The Executive Council of the CGIAR approved the Alliance proposal that it provide oversight through the Alliance Executive (and the Alliance Board, in cases of conflict) to the plans and their implementation both in West and Central Africa and in East and Southern Africa. Alliance governance of regional plans has the advantage of holding transaction costs down by administering work with existing bodies instead of creating new structures.

The Alliance unanimously decided to submit a coherent and coordinated set of proposals in answer to the CGIAR call for proposals for new Challenge Programs. This was a departure from history and what happened with the first call for proposals for Challenge Programs. A coordinated set of proposals builds scientific synergies where needed and thereby improves the quality and relevance of the proposals.

The Alliance continued to work with the Science Council on the improvement of performance indicators. It contributed to ongoing thinking on the funding of the priorities by providing a paper that analyzed the gaps and overlaps in Center activities for four of the System priorities. The paper was used as an input to the work of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Funding the Priorities.

All Centers with genebanks signed agreements with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which acted for the governing body of the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. This puts the collections held in trust by the Centers — over 600,000 accessions of crop, forage and agroforestry genetic resources — at the heart of the treaty's multilateral system for germplasm access and benefit-sharing. And it positions the Centers to play a central role in implementing the treaty and developing a global conservation system (see page 15).

Following the first phase of upgrading the in-trust collections, supported by the World Bank, the Systemwide Genetic Resources Program obtained approval for a second phase requiring an investment of US\$10.5 million. This supports further upgrading at the 11 Centers that hold large plant collections in trust, combined with collective action to integrate and share standards and

The ratification of principles and procedures is among several recent accomplishments of the newly formulated Alliance of CGIAR Centers





The Alliance Board and Alliance Executive meet at International Center for Tropical Agriculture headquarters, Cali, Colombia.

methodologies, thereby improving Systemwide efficiency and effectiveness.

The 15 Centers have recently decided, through their Alliance Executive, to develop a large research program on climate change, agriculture and food security in collaboration with the global environmental change community. The chairs and directors of the four international global environmental change programs* and their joint projects have likewise formally approved the preparation of a collaborative research program with the Alliance. In joint discussions, scientific plans are being finalized for each of the research priority areas identified, and a joint fund-raising strategy is under development.

In follow up to the stripe review commissioned by the Alliance in 2005, the Centers are pleased to report that they all have internal controls in place to identify and control risk and review Center effectiveness. The systems are designed to manage, rather than try to eliminate, the risk of failure in achieving Centers' strategic objectives, and thereby provide reasonable assurance against material misstatement or loss.

On matters of governance, the Alliance Board held the ninth Board Training Program following the Annual General Meeting 2006. Since 2004, the program has trained 145 board members and board secretaries in the roles and responsibilities of a trustee, in financial and risk management, and in human resources within the CGIAR System.

We feel confident that the Alliance, in the short time since it was so formulated, has acquired the momentum to achieve concrete results in the coming years for the benefit of many of the poorest communities in the world.

Jim Godfrey
Alliance Board Chair

Joachim Voss
Alliance Executive Chair

* DIVERSITAS, International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change and World Climate Research Programme, which together comprise the Earth System Science Partnership.