

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

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FROM: The Secretariat

September 15, 1980

International Food Policy Research
Institute (IFPRI)

Attached for the information of members of the Consultative Group is a copy of a letter from Dr. Sen, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of IFPRI, to Mr. Baum, Chairman of the CGIAR, about the mandate and location of IFPRI. Also attached are two annexes mentioned in the letter -- Annex A "Revised Mandate" and Annex C "Location of the Institute".

Attachments

Distribution:

CG Members
TAC Chairman and Secretariat
Center Board Chairmen
Center Directors

**INTERNATIONAL
FOOD
POLICY
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE**

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28 March 1980

Mr. Warren C. Baum
Chairman
CGIAR
1818 H Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20433

Dear Mr. Baum:

You will recall that following its Review Mission to IFPRI in January 1979 the TAC expressed certain concerns that the Institute's mandate as then formulated, was very broad and could be read and interpreted in various ways. It recommended that the mandate should give its principal emphasis to the problems of developing countries, and that the central tasks in its program should be concerned with the linkages and interrelationships between the problems of the adoption of new technologies and the wider economic and socio-economic aspects of agricultural development. The TAC felt that the work on trends analysis and international food trade should be considered only as supporting activities to the main research programs. It suggested that more emphasis should be given to collaboration with national institutions in developing countries and to the possibilities of useful interaction with ISNAR. It therefore recommended that IFPRI re-examine its mandate in the light of these considerations.

The TAC also considered the question of the location of the Institute, and recommended that IFPRI move its headquarters from Washington to a developing country.

The Board took note of these concerns and gave them very serious consideration, including appointing an independent consultant to evaluate the issue of location as requested by the CGIAR. The conclusions were reported to the September 1979 Board meeting and an interim report was presented to the October 1979 CGIAR meeting.

A revised mandate was also circulated to members of the CGIAR. This highlighted the Institute's emphasis on problems of developing countries, and on the poorer groups in those countries. It also reflected the TAC's cautionary note against IFPRI becoming too enmeshed in service tasks. Collaboration with national institutions in developing countries, and with the production science institutes of the CGIAR system was given more emphasis.

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Nevertheless the Board felt that in its experience (which the Institute's work thus far seemed to confirm), the ramifications of food policy, and particularly of the linkages between food, other aspects of agricultural production, trade and aid, and between agricultural and general economic growth, were wide. Food policy research should therefore not be viewed in too narrow a context. It regarded the trends analysis work both as important to the analytical work of the other programs of the institute and as generating useful policy conclusions in its own right. Trade policy is intimately related to food security, to aid, to production (both in terms of input availability and the pattern of output), and to economic development overall. For these reasons the Board did not wish to include any clauses in the revised mandate which would be too restrictive on the Institute's flexibility, and particularly might constrain it from working as seen necessary, on trends or trade.

The revised mandate was conveyed to the CGIAR by the Secretariat memorandum of 5 October 1979, and was discussed at the October CGIAR meeting in Washington. It was suggested then that the focus of the mandate might still be sharpened, particularly to emphasize the links between IFPRI and other institutes of the CGIAR system.

Both the mandate and the issue of location were discussed further and in depth at the Board's recent meeting in New Delhi, and I have been requested by the Trustees to convey to you their recommendations. I would like to deal with the two issues separately.

Proposed Revision of IFPRI's Mandate

The Board recognizes the need to reflect in the mandate the important relationship between IFPRI and the other members of the CGIAR system, and has amended the text submitted to the 1979 CGIAR meeting accordingly by the insertion of a new second paragraph in the revised new mandate which is attached (Annex A). Certain other changes have been made to highlight the fact that the Institute's main concern is with policies leading to the alleviation of hunger and malnutrition in the poorer countries, and for purposes of clarification. These changes reflect the Board's sympathy with the TAC's view that IFPRI's research program should focus on priority food needs of the developing countries, and especially the low-income food deficit countries. This has been a basic principle of the Institute since its inception.

At the same time the Board feels that because IFPRI is a policy research institute it has to deal with wide-ranging issues. To restrict its mandate too narrowly to micro-level research might so circumscribe IFPRI's work as to upset the needed balance between macro and micro approaches and to affect adversely the relevance and quality of the micro-level investigations themselves. Therefore, while IFPRI will remain selective in its activities, it must, in the Board's view remain involved in work on trends, trade, food aid, and food security. It is evident from the responses to IFPRI's research reports that there is considerable interest in the policy implications of such research, which is complementary to, but not duplicative of micro-level research.

The Board trusts that the new text meets the requirements of the TAC and of the Chairman of its Review Mission without unduly limiting the scope of the Institute's work. It therefore recommends that this be adopted by the CGIAR as IFPRI's mandate. In view of the need for the Institute to move speedily towards the formulation of its long-range program, it hopes that the members of the Group will endorse this recommendation.

The Location of the Institute

The Board examined this important question further in the light of the CGIAR discussion of the subject, the responses received from members of the Consultative Group to a letter from the Director forwarding IFPRI's Consultant's report on the location issue, and a subsequent analytical position paper prepared by the Secretary to the Board. These documents are attached for information of the CGIAR (Annexes B and C).

The Board concluded that no location could provide the all-embracing perception of Third World conditions required by IFPRI's mandate, and no alternative location, at least in a developing country, can currently provide better operating facilities than Washington.

The Board recognizes the over-riding importance of IFPRI's staff having and being able to maintain a clear and up-to-date perception of the food and nutrition situation in the Third World, and of the broader policy issues related to that situation. It shares this concern with the TAC.

However, because IFPRI's mandate is truly global, even if its main focus is on problems of hunger and malnutrition in the poorer developing countries; and because its work is neither commodity nor location-specific, the Board sees no possibility of covering the whole spectrum of problems on which IFPRI is called upon to work from any one location. There is no substitute for a widely

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experienced staff, for frequent staff travel to developing countries, for expanding working relationships and interchanges of staff with many national programs, and with other international centers and agencies dispersed around the world. Some degree of regional devolution of staff working on collaborative projects may be necessary as the Institute's program evolves, but the Board does not see this being a major element of a small institute's operations. Nor is it a substitute for a well-chosen, strategically located headquarters site, with strong supporting facilities of the type essential to the operational efficiency of a policy oriented research institution working mainly in the social sciences. The Board's opinion is that there is no other location at this time which offers better facilities than Washington from this point of view.

Although it appreciates the concerns expressed by the TAC and its Review Mission concerning political or work pressures on the Institute as a result of its being located in Washington, the Board finds no evidence that any pressures have been exerted. A move would not necessarily eliminate the risk of such pressures. Nor does it visualize the possible perception of the Institute having a privileged position through a Washington location as a serious threat to the efficiency, independence, or integrity of IFPRI. The relation of these matters to the effective pursuit of the Institute's mandate seems tenuous and not a pervasive argument for a move, which would undoubtedly have a considerable short term disruptive effect on its work.

The estimated capital costs of a move to New Delhi - the most suitable 1dc location of those reviewed, range between \$630,000 and \$900,000 at 1979 prices. If these represent a once for all charge on the CGIAR as a whole rather than on the donors to IFPRI, they do not appear a factor of importance. If IFPRI's current donors had to offset them from their annual contributions the effect would be serious. The operating costs in Washington are unlikely to be higher than average for the ten sites cited by the Consultant, and would probably be in the low range when the normal benefits enjoyed by present staff of other institutes located in developing countries are taken into account. The Board therefore does not see this as having an important bearing on the decision.

In the light of these and other considerations set out in the supporting documents (Annexes B and C), the Board recommends that the headquarters of the Institute be maintained in Washington. I hope that this decision (which was only arrived at after the most careful consideration of all the arguments for and against moving) will be acceptable to the CGIAR.

Warm regards.

Yours sincerely,
S. R. Sen
S. R. Sen
Chairman, IFPRI.

21 March 1980

INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

REVISED MANDATE

(Substantive changes from draft discussed at the November 1979 CGIAR meeting underlined.)

- Amended
para 1
1. The International Food Policy Research Institute was established to identify and analyze alternative national and international strategies and policies for reducing hunger and malnutrition in the world, with primary emphasis on low-income countries and on the poorer groups in those countries. Although its research effort is geared to the precise objective of contributing to the reduction of hunger and malnutrition, the factors involved are thus many and wide-ranging, requiring analysis of underlying processes and extending beyond a narrowly defined food sector. IFPRI's research program is to reflect worldwide interaction with policymakers, administrators, and others concerned with increasing food production and with improving the equity of its distribution.
- New para 2
highlight-
ing
collabora-
tion with
the CGIAR
system
2. In pursuit of its task IFPRI is to work closely with the other institutions of the CGIAR system in achieving common and complementary objectives, given the need for careful study of the possible social and economic consequences of the use of new technologies, and the crucial importance of identifying linkages and inter-relationships between the actions of farmers in their adoption and effective use, and national or international policies which either constrain or encourage successful innovation.
- Amended
para 3
3. With its mandate, IFPRI's criteria for program development are to emphasize the importance of specific food policy problems to the developing countries, the potential for comparative analysis with respect to them, the need for improved conceptualization, the complementarity among components of IFPRI's research, and above all the opportunity for policy action.

4. IFPRI's policy oriented research is to stress alternative development strategies from the viewpoint of their implications for food production and consumption; food production processes, particularly the role of technological change in agriculture; food consumption issues, particularly as they relate to low-income groups; and international food trade, aid, and food security.

5. A portion of IFPRI's research is to be oriented to defining the size, composition, and dynamics of the world food problem both at present and for various periods in the future. This activity builds on the data base and related work of other international and national organizations. Through this work, IFPRI is to search out the lacunae in the understanding of world food problems, with the specific objective of defining the needs for further policy research and drawing these to the attention of policymakers and the research community.

6. IFPRI is to be highly selective in its choice of topics for research. It cannot hope to review the food policies of every country, nor can it attempt to take on agricultural sector analyses or long-term perspective studies on a service basis. On the other hand, carefully selected comparative studies of development experiences and the lessons to be drawn therefrom is to be part of the Institute's work. Such analyses will assist IFPRI's investigations of crucial problems involving policy decisions of world significance for future food supply whereas the more specific objective will be to identify common elements affecting countries widely dispersed geographically. Similarly, IFPRI may occasionally do in-depth analyses of food strategy for particular countries, to forward understanding of interaction among the component parts of food policy and to shed light on particularly important food policy cases and the international implications of national food policies.

Amended
sentence
including
last sentence
of old para
3.

7. As much as possible IFPRI's research is to be carried out in collaboration with national research organizations pursuing similar lines of enquiry. Through such collaboration IFPRI will achieve interaction with developing country national research systems which will lead to effective problem identification, data collection and analysis, and to the eventual dissemination of IFPRI research results to those most likely to find them useful. Similar working relationships with appropriate international organizations and the IARCS will not only further expand IFPRI's data base, but will also assist it to formulate research projects relevant to international policy needs.

(Last sentence of old para.6 deleted and incorporated in new para.2)

8. The IFPRI research program is to draw upon and complement the work of organizations such as FAO, the IBRD, and similar multilateral agencies with major programs in food and agricultural policy analysis or socioeconomic research related to agriculture. IFPRI is to be alert to important research and information gaps, paying special attention to the need for objective analysis of controversial or politically sensitive issues which IFPRI is in a particularly favourable position to approach.

9. IFPRI is to disseminate its research results to a wide public, particularly to officials, administrators, and others influential in the making of national and international food and agriculture policy. This it will do informally through direct working relationships established between its senior staffmembers and leading members of the public, and through its collaborative relationships with national and international agencies involved in food matters. More formal outreach methods will include publications, conferences, seminars, and workshops, arranged in cooperation with concerned national and international agencies, to discuss topics of mutual interest, and to provide interaction between researchers and policymakers in substantive areas in which IFPRI has completed research. IFPRI research reports and other publications are to be distributed to a worldwide audience of those known to be concerned with food policy.

10. Training through participation in research both at headquarters and in the field is to be an important part of the Institute's effort. Interaction among IFPRI's research staff and between its researchers and those

from other institutions will provide valuable informal training opportunities in addition to more formal arrangements through internships at IFPRI.

PROPOSITION PAPER FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES, FEBRUARY 1980

LOCATION OF THE INSTITUTE

1. The Origin of the issue and historical background

The question of the optimum location for an institute with IFPRI's objectives was first debated by the TAC and its special sub-committee on socio-economic research as long ago as 1974, prior to the establishment of IFPRI itself under the sponsorship of IDRC and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations in 1975. The sub-committee recommended Washington as a suitable location for such an institute; and the founding sponsors, after further deliberation of alternative locations concurred that Washington was probably the optimum base and decided to establish the institute there.

Important reasons for this decision were i) the international nature of the role envisaged for IFPRI by the TAC as then constituted, and by the original sponsors of the Institute, ii) the accessibility to a strong and varied data base, iii) the ease of access of Washington to the world at large, iv) the existence of an important intellectual community in and around Washington, v) the attractiveness of Washington to high quality international staff, especially from developing countries, vi) the simplicity of establishing IFPRI as a non-profit organization under US law, vii) the strong resource base of computer, library facilities, secretarial services etc. in the area 1/.

Trustees will recall that the issue was re-opened in January 1979 by the review mission appointed by the TAC to examine the question of whether IFPRI should be included as an Institute funded by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. The review mission recommended that the Institute should move to a developing country if it became a member of the CGIAR. At its February 1979 meeting the TAC endorsed this recommendation.

The rationale of the review mission and subsequently of the TAC itself for transmitting this recommendation to the CGIAR with its support, was four-fold. 2/ It was felt:

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- 1/ See Report of Technical Advisory Committee, Tenth meeting, Rome 1974; and A Prospectus for the International Food Policy Research Institute, May 1975.
- 2/ See page 2 Document AGD/TAC-IAR/79/13, March 1979. TAC Secretariat. Also paras 32, 33 and 127 of Mission Report; 18 Jan. 1979.

- i. That an l.d.c. environment was more appropriate for a research institute working on problems of food shortage and hunger because the staff would perceive the actual nature of those problems in day-to-day life, and this could possibly help them in making their research work more relevant and their policy analysis more realistic.
- ii. That a location in a developing country would protect IFPRI from undue influences by donors, and/or avoid its work being perceived by others as being subject to those influences and therefore not as objective and independent as they would wish.
- iii. That a location in Washington might be seen as giving IFPRI a privileged status in the CGIAR system.
- iv. That it was also necessary to shield IFPRI from being used as a policy advisory body for international institutions such as the CGIAR and the World Bank.

It will be seen that apart from the important argument raised under i) above these points bear rather a tenuous relationship to the operating efficiency of IFPRI in the light of its mandate, whereas this question was paramount in the original decision as to its present location.

While the TAC recognized that no immediate transfer of IFPRI to a developing country location could be expected, it suggested that the CGIAR should request a sufficient assurance from the Board that a move would eventually be effected, and this as soon as possible. It was implied that the CGIAR should only give favourable consideration to IFPRI's inclusion in the system if such an assurance was received from the Board.

The Board discussed the review mission and TAC recommendations, at a special meeting of its ad hoc committee on entry to the CGIAR, in March 1979. It requested the Director to appoint an independent consultant to undertake a study of the issue including alternative locations to Washington. It informed the CGIAR that it had the matter under consideration and would be prepared to transfer the headquarters of the Institute to a developing country in due course if the CG accepted this as necessary and desirable. Dr. G. Hart Schaaf, a retired senior international civil servant with wide experience of developing countries was appointed to undertake the study, which was completed in time for consideration by the Board in September 1979.

At its Paris meeting in May the CGIAR, after hearing the TAC views, noted that IFPRI had agreed to undertake a study of the question, looking at the full range of considerations and possible costs, and asked that the Board should report its conclusions to the October CG meeting in Washington. It also agreed to include IFPRI as a full member of the Group.

After the meeting Mr. Baum, Chairman of the CGIAR, wrote to Sir John Crawford as Chairman of the Board, (dated June 7, 1979) referring to the decision and welcoming IFPRI to the Group. He stated that IFPRI's formal adoption by the Group, and its acquisition of 'international status' would need to be accompanied by a number of actions by IFPRI, "as, for example, the revision of its charter, and changes in the provisions for Board appointments".

In a subsequent Secretariat note on the Agenda for the October CG meeting, circulated to CGIAR members in September, under the item entitled "Adoption of IFPRI", Mr. Lejeune, Executive Secretary of the CGIAR, stated: "In May 1979 the Group agreed in principle to adopt IFPRI. Support was, however, conditional on certain actions by IFPRI, including development of an express mandate, analysis of the feasibility of moving its headquarters to a developing country, and appropriately amending its constitutional arrangements to bring them into line with those of IARCs recently established by the CGIAR".

He concludes "Formal action should be taken during the CG meeting itself, and the aim of discussion will be to arrive at a conclusion as to whether IFPRI has satisfied the conditions for adoption and to record an explicit formal decision on adopting IFPRI". He informed IFPRI that this statement was consistent with the verbatim report and minutes of the CGIAR Paris meeting.

2. The Board's views on the location issue and the conclusions of the Study.

The Board reviewed its Consultant's report at its September 1979 meeting. It recognized that he had rather little time to undertake a study which ideally might require extensive travel and interviews, and that in view of this he had done a commendable job in managing to discuss the issue with some forty carefully chosen and experienced people. It was felt that the Study was well written, conscientiously prepared, and brought some fresh insights to bear on the location question.

It was noted that the Consultant had made a conscious attempt to avoid any impression of defending the present Washington base of the Institute, by giving rather little weight to costs of relocating or the disruptive effects of moving. Mr. Schaaf explained that this was because his focus had been on attempting to weigh the pros and cons of moving to a fresh location in a developing country based on the argument that the main issue to be considered was where IFPRI could best do its work. If a move was necessary in order to enable IFPRI to carry out its mandate more effectively, he felt that the Institute should be re-located regardless of costs or short-term disruptive effects. The report was seen to represent a genuine attempt at an unbiased weighting of the possible gains of being in a developing country balanced against the possible disadvantages of a move from Washington.

Nevertheless several Trustees expressed reservations as to the method by which the Consultant reached his ultimate conclusion, which was strongly in favour of the Institute's remaining in Washington. These reservations centred mainly on four issues.

- i) The matrix table on which the Consultant placed much weight relied too much on the judgements, motivations, and interests of the people interviewed. The weighting used was also judgmental, yet might give a spurious impression of precision. It was felt that the Study's conclusions might be faulted on this ground, whereas a careful analysis of the information in terms of IFPRI's mandate would in fact support its conclusions.
- ii) The interview base was too limited, especially as it related to European or developing country CGIAR donors; or other persons concerned with food policy in developing countries apart from those who happened by chance to be available in Washington. Among other things it was necessary to understand the considerations in the minds of those in the CGIAR who felt that IFPRI should move. A wider sample should therefore be sought.
- iii) The opportunity cost of moving was not sufficiently considered, i.e. the disruption of work in the short-run versus the possible advantages of a move in the longer term.
- iv) The operating cost estimates in the Consultant's Annex IX might be misleading, since the various additional benefits enjoyed by staff at international centres located in Third World countries were not taken into account, thus biasing them downwards compared to Washington where staff did not receive many of those advantages.

It was therefore agreed by the Trustees that while the Consultant's report provided a valuable base for further analysis, and the very strong case against moving should be noted, it should not form the sole element of the Board's recommendation to the CGIAR. It was decided to make an interim report to the October meeting, stating that the Consultant's report was in hand, but that it did not finish the analysis IFPRI wished to make. This would be completed and a final report and recommendation given to the CG by the Board in time for its first meeting in 1980.

This task would be approached through focusing on the mandate of the Institute, the kind of work IFPRI was doing, and how that work could best be carried out, including maintaining contact with the realities of developing world policy. This would lead to a considered statement by the Board. It was felt that this measured approach reflected the seriousness with which the Board viewed the matter and its anxiety not to be rushed into a decision, which might be interpreted by some as a bias in favour of Washington. The Chairman re-affirmed the Board's open-mindedness on the location issue and its willingness to move to a new site if so decided by the CGIAR, as reported to the CGIAR in May 1979. The Director was instructed to take the necessary steps to convey this information to the CGIAR.

3. The CGIAR discussion at its October meeting.

The report conveyed by IFPRI to the CGIAR meeting is attached (Annex 1). This was somewhat elaborated, after consultation with Sir John Crawford, compared to the very brief statement without supporting tables, originally sent to the CG Secretariat on the Board's instructions. This was because the Executive Secretary, Mr. Lejeune, strongly advised that the latter would not, in his opinion, adequately satisfy the CGIAR request for a statement and might even lead to delay or rejection of IFPRI's formal adoption by the CG. It was therefore decided to expand the statement as given in the Annex and to support it with some of the Consultant's tables.

No complaints were received from CG members about the statement as eventually transmitted to them. There was little debate on the location issue, as the Board's intention of making a final recommendation to the next CG meeting defused the question. Japan remarked that it preferred to support institutes located in developing countries. However the future direction and conduct of research was seen by the Japanese representative as the key issue, and the Board's concern over the problems and difficulties of moving was viewed sympathetically. Germany expressed satisfaction with the IFPRI position paper and the consultant's criteria, and regretted that the Board had been unable to decide in September on that basis. No attempt was made to block or delay IFPRI's formal adoption on grounds of inadequacy of the information given on location, or because of the Board's decision to defer a final recommendation while pursuing the matter further. The Chairman (Baum) remarked that he saw no particular sense from the discussion that the CG wanted IFPRI to move.

Following some soundings made at that meeting it was decided that probably the most effective way of soliciting further opinions from CG members on this question (as requested by the Board), would be to circularize all those listed by the Secretariat as representing their countries officially at the CGIAR, (but not the observers).

Accordingly, the letter attached as Annex 2, together with a copy of Hart Schaaf's report, was despatched on 6 November to the list of addressees shown in the Annex. Only four replies have been received, all from industrialized countries. These replies are attached as Annex 3. None of those received was critical of the report. One took a 'no comment' attitude. The other four supported IFPRI remaining in Washington.

4. Points for consideration by the Board in formulating its recommendations to the CGIAR.

i) The implications of IFPRI's mandate and modus operandi for its location.

The central issue pinpointed by the Board in its September discussion is whether the effect of moving the location of IFPRI to a developing country would be to enhance, retard, or impair the effectiveness with which the Institute can pursue its mandate. It is therefore relevant to commence a review of this question by examining the specific characteristics of that mandate and their implications for IFPRI's location.

IFPRI's mandate differs significantly from that of most other International Centers in that it is neither commodity nor location-specific. It is policy-oriented. Its focus is on food and on the food problems of Third World countries. The latter is undoubtedly a powerful argument for it moving to a developing country.

However, it has become clear in the evolution of its program that food policy cannot easily be isolated from wider issues of policy: for example, trade, aid, prices, and the general policy emphasis of economic development. Nor can Third World food problems always be treated entirely separately from wider international food issues. Indeed the debate at the October CGIAR meeting suggests that some CG members see IFPRI working on an even wider range of issues, including such matters as post-harvest losses and related technology, agro-industries (including the role of transnationals), on resource conservation issues, fishery problems, low input agriculture and energy relationships, etc.. It is unlikely that even with a highly selective coverage of priority issues the range and breadth of the problems on which IFPRI might have to work could be covered adequately from any single location without widespread travel to many Third World countries; nor, in present world circumstances that a location in a developing country would necessarily enhance IFPRI's ability to identify and cover these problems compared to its Washington base. 1/

IFPRI's modus operandi also differs significantly from other International Agricultural Research Centers in that its programs relate principally to the social rather than the biological or physical sciences.

1/ It is worth noting that from time to time it has also been suggested that FAO headquarters should be shifted to a developing country for rather similar reasons, mainly that this would improve its staff's perceptions of Third World problems. However it has always been decided eventually that the gains would not outweigh the disadvantages.

In this sense the importance of the physical environment in which the work has to be conducted is not over-riding; weather conditions, irrigation and drainage, topography, pests and diseases etc: do not affect the output of the research. Thus while a location in an environment which is at least broadly representative of the range of physical problems to be encountered is absolutely critical to the validity of the results of a biologically-oriented institute, this may not have the same degree of force to a predominantly socially-oriented institute. The experience of ADC may be relevant here.

The implications of this analysis for the location of the Institute are fourfold :-

First it suggests strongly that commodity-specific issues should not be given any weight in site-selection. Rather the aim should be to locate IFPRI at a point where it has ready access to as wide a range of information as possible on all important food commodities; as well as on other problems transcending commodity issues to which its research might be able to make a valuable contribution or on which data may be needed to facilitate its research.

Second IFPRI's work cannot be concentrated on one country or region, whether geographic, political, or agroclimatic. In this sense the word "universality" applied to its remit by some Trustees at the September 1979 meeting is correct and not pretentious. It does not have a global responsibility, but it has a global concern. Although it must be selective in its choice of where, and on what problems to work, it can also be quite eclectic. While it has tended to concentrate substantial resources on the problems of the poorest and most heavily populated countries, especially in Asia, it is no way mandated to restrict its research to any area or segment of world population. Comparative analysis across countries and geographical or agroclimatic regions, forms an essential part of its research. Lessons derived from research on one region or country may not be specific to that country and hypotheses or examples derived from such research may need to be tested elsewhere.

It is therefore vital that its location is such that its staff can have easy access to a widely representative range of countries and environments. This seems to suggest that its headquarters should either be in a place which is fairly neutral environmentally such as Washington or Singapore, or that it should be in an area (country) with a wide range of environments within easy reach, e.g. India or Brazil. An unfavourable location would be in a small developing country with poor communications and/or an economy unrepresentative of the general pattern of problems on which IFPRI was likely to be mainly working on. This might both give a biased perception of the conditions, and problems in the low-income countries, and restrict opportunities for travelling to more representative countries.

Third Because of the breadth of IFPRI's potential coverage its audience is necessarily also broad. It embraces both social scientists and other scientific disciplines and humanities on the technical side; and policy makers, planners, and the public at large on the application side. Its findings may often be more transferable across environments than those of more biologically-oriented centers because they relate to ideas, methodology, policies, and experiences rather than to materials.

Easy means of contact with a wide audience is thus of crucial importance to its success in the implementation of its research results. Information is its stock in trade, and the principle means of conveying those results to those who need to know about them as a basis for policy decisions. Indeed the TAC sees conferences and seminars on problems of food policy organized by IFPRI with staff of governmental and non-governmental institutions, as the most effective means of raising the productivity of both IFPRI and the national institutions. Our experience so far shows that it is essential to be based at a location with fairly sophisticated communications and travel facilities in order to organize such meetings efficiently.

Fourth Both the CGIAR and the TAC set great store on IFPRI's role in complementing the work of the other International Centers, and also that of International Development Assistance Agencies such as FAO, the World Bank, and the Regional Banks. However, these are widely dispersed geographically; and, as the TAC review committee's report points out this may represent a major constraint to developing potential complementarities. It implies a carefully chosen, central, and accessible location to minimize travel costs for IFPRI staff visiting those institutions. Decentralization to the field of some staff engaged in collaborative projects with the Centers, (as suggested by the Review Panel) could be helpful, but this has a limited potential for a small Institute, and is more difficult to administer.

Fifth Given that IFPRI must rely heavily for its output on interaction among a strong core of widely experienced headquarters staff in a range of disciplines, and staff at other International Centers, Development Assistance Agencies, and national institutions; its headquarters must not only be easily accessible, but attractive to highly qualified and experienced staff. This implies good working facilities, (computers, library, offices etc:), an intellectual community with which to interact, availability of adequately trained research assistants and other supporting staff, and a good environment of housing, schools, recreational facilities, etc: The latter can of course be created, as they have by other Centers; but not within the budget envisaged for IFPRI by the CGIAR. Nor need they be if a location can be found where they already exist.

All these points suggest strongly that the criteria set up by the founders of IFPRI were sound, in the light of the Institute's mandate, programme, and operating efficiency; and that since Washington meets all of them, this choice for the Institute's location was also sound. This, however, does not necessarily mean that an equally satisfactory location could not be found in a developing country. The question therefore resolves itself into two issues :-

i) Does such a location exist. If so there might be long-term advantages in moving, and only short term costs to offset against those gains.

ii) If there is no equivalent location in the light of these criteria are there still major reasons which make a move from Washington highly desirable or imperative? Would these outweigh the disadvantages, including capital costs of moving, differences in operating costs (if higher), and the short-term disruptive effects of moving on the work of the Institute? Such reasons might relate either to positive longer-term gains in fulfilling IFPRI's mandate as a result of moving; or negative factors influencing its work if it remains in Washington.

ii) The merits of alternative locations.

Hart Schaaf examined this question in detail, and it forms the main element of his report and his tables and Annexes. His conclusion is clear. None of his nine alternatives, on the criteria he uses, gives all the advantages of Washington, and some appear at a major disadvantage, especially Abidjan and Cairo. All his best approximations are in Asia. A relevant question is whether any other choice of cities would have enhanced the case for moving IFPRI from Washington in terms of effectiveness of its operations.

The Consultant's reply to the Board on this issue is that the list of locations which could have been considered is obviously much longer, even excluding those which for reasons of inaccessibility, lack of facilities, political instability, or unrepresentativeness would clearly be unsuitable. However, he has stated his criteria for choice, and pointed out that he could not consider every possible place. This seems fair comment: one can identify proxies for almost every city on his list - Dakar or Lagos for Abidjan; Manila for Bangkok and vice-versa; San Jose for Mexico City; Santiago for Rio; Tunis or Damascus for Cairo; Kuala Lumpur for Singapore etc.; but they do not seem to advance the case much if short term considerations such as current political attitudes or rates of inflation are excluded.

Since no location can be seen as clearly better at meeting the criteria on which the choice of Washington was made the issue can only be determined on the position taken by the TAC. Basically this boils down to two questions :-

a) Would a developing country location so enhance IFPRI's perceptions of Third World problems that its ability to fulfill its mandate would be enhanced regardless of the apparent disadvantages listed by the Consultant compared to Washington? (On the basis of the rationale advanced by both the Consultant and the Board I am excluding here consideration of capital costs or moving or possible differences in operating costs, and looking solely at benefits to IFPRI's work).

b) Are there pressures or other perceived disadvantages to IFPRI which are generated by its being in Washington, which would not exist if it were moved to a developing country.

iii) Would IFPRI's perception of hunger, malnutrition and Third World problems be enhanced if it were located in a developing country ?

The TAC's and the Review Committee's approach to this issue, to which they gave almost unqualified approval, seems to have been based largely on judgement, since no detailed analysis was attempted of the implications.

The Board discussed this issue at some length in September 1979, and reached no definite conclusion, although it clearly recognized that a sound perception of Third World problems was of first importance to the fulfilment of IFPRI's mandate.

The main question on which unanimity was lacking is the best way of achieving this perception. Several Trustees noted that its nature might vary considerably depending on which developing country or region IFPRI was based in.

Both physical and socio-economic factors are involved. For example, ecological conditions in the winter rainfall (Mediterranean) and summer rainfall (semi-arid tropical), dry climates largely determine their farming systems except where irrigation acts as a neutralizer; and both types of dry climate are quite different from the humid tropical agricultural environment. Regional social patterns differ considerably between South and S.E. Asia (predominantly peasant smallholdings), Africa (still strong tribal influences and communal land holding), parts of Latin America (great inequities in land holding size). The policies and approaches which are feasible or required in land-abundant countries may be quite different, at least in the short run, from those in land-scarce countries. These factors impact differently with the physical environment to produce widely different farming systems even in areas of similar climate, such as the Indian and Sahelian Semi-Arid Tropics, and the SAT in N.E. Brazil. In some countries it is probably the urban poor who are most seriously affected by hunger. In others the pattern of agriculture or the social structure is atypical of most Third World Countries; for example in Malaysia where a highly successful plantation agriculture has developed, both in the private and the public sectors. Tables 1 and 2 illustrate how widely the various locations suggested by the Consultant differ demographically, economically, and agro-climatically.

Four conclusions emerge. First, a judiciously selected location in a developing country could provide IFPRI researchers with heightened perceptions of some of the problems facing policy makers in the Third World, in particular those of hunger and poverty. Clearly these cannot be obtained as sharply by travel from Washington. Second, no single location in a developing country can give an adequate and balanced perception of all Third World problems.

Third, an unwise choice of location could give a seriously biased view of those problems. Whether this would be more biased than being in a developed country is another question.

Fourth, being located in a developing country is not in itself a substitute for an experienced core staff with a strong and balanced component of developing country personnel, for extensive travel, and for expanding collaborative research relations with appropriate Third World countries in order to cover the entire spectrum of their conditions and problems adequately.

This is not necessarily an argument against moving from Washington to a developing country, nor a claim that adequate perceptions of Third World problems can be obtained solely from work at a Washington-based institute. This is obviously fallacious. However, it is equally fallacious to assume that moving will provide some magical formula or heightened perception of all the problems on which IFPRI may be called on to work, which would greatly enhance its effectiveness overall.

iv) Are there other disadvantages of being in Washington which outweigh its convenience.

The TAC listed three disadvantages which it perceived as applying to IFPRI's Washington location other than the fact that it is not in a developing country. These can be summarized under the headings of political pressures, pressures for service tasks, and privileged status.

Political influences can take two forms. One is an overt attempt by a host country to persuade an Institute to work (or not to engage in work) on a given problem. The fact that no such pressure has yet been exerted on IFPRI does not guarantee that it never would be. Nor, however, would a move to another country - developed or developing, necessarily free it from such pressures or the threat of them. No watertight guarantee can be expected anywhere. It is therefore the risk that others may perceive that IFPRI might be under such influences (even when it is not), that concerns the TAC. However it may be difficult to find any location which no other country views with suspicion. Since the TAC Review Committee seems to believe that bigger countries are regarded with greater suspicion because they tend to have more influence on the world food and agricultural scene, this criticism might apply to Brazil, India or Nigeria, as well as to Washington. However TAC's specific concern is probably not merely with the host country being large, but also that it is a developed country, and that country the United States. It would be unwise to ignore the existence of this political problem; the issue is whether it looms sufficiently large to outweigh the advantages of a Washington base when balanced with other pros and cons of moving. We have no real evidence that it does.

The second form of influence is more subtle, and in IFPRI's case would apply mainly in it moved to a developing country. This is the danger of the staff of an Institute becoming so deeply involved in the research on problems of its host country that it becomes myopic about others or commits too many resources to work in that country. The TAC does recognize this possibility, and the past history of some existing IARCs suggests that this can be a real problem. It is probably a greater hazard when an Institute is based in a large such as India or Brazil with a wide range of absorbing, apparently relevant and researchable problems. Again, this is not a reason for opposing a move to a developing country, but a warning that it may be naïve to expect such a move to be without problems of its own.

Pressures by other Agencies might be exerted by the CGIAR, the Centers, the World Bank, or other International Agencies for IFPRI to perform a service role, or to divert substantial resources from what it might otherwise be doing to some other, perhaps lower priority research required by those agencies. The TAC and the Review Panel are nervous that the Institute's independence and identity might somehow be compromised in this way, and the Panel suggests in one statement that the advantages gained from the presence of the CGIAR Secretariat, World Bank, IADB etc: in Washington, access to their information, data, and library facilities and that of USDA, and the proximity of the N. American intellectual community are all outweighed by this risk. On the other hand there are ambiguities in its attitudes, since its report elsewhere lays considerable emphasis on the value of developing collaboration, close working relationships, and contacts with such bodies.

IFPRI's experience so far confirms that they are extremely useful, if not essential, to its work. Although the Institute is likely to expand its capacity to develop primary data from its own research, especially as its collaboration with the Centers and national institutions evolves; it will continue to rely substantially on secondary data and the experience of other development assistance agencies for many of its conclusions. The size of its staff in relation to the nature and universality of its role makes this virtually unavoidable. It is particularly important to the conduct of the trend analysis and trade programs.

Taking the working efficiency of the Institute as the main criterion suggests that these advantages greatly outweigh the potential (and so far unproven) possibility of pressure for service as a result of the present location of the Institute. The decision as to whether to accept or refuse to take on work at the request of another agency must be ultimately with the management of the Institute. It can always reject irrelevant or overly taxing tasks. There is no guarantee that moving to a developing country would reduce these risks, about which other International Centers also complain.

v) Privileged status

The argument that IFPRI should move to a developing country in order to avoid it being seen as having a privileged status in the CGIAR system because of its present location is weak. In the first place we have no evidence that our position is so regarded, nor does the TAC or the Review Committee explain what it means by this or by whom it may be perceived; secondly, it appears to be unrelated to the central issue of the operating efficiency or effectiveness of the Institute.

Although we hope that the income tax onus will soon be resolved by its receiving International status under US law, its very location is likely to preclude its staff from receiving a number of other privileges enjoyed by other Center staff, for example annual leave, educational grants, car and housing allowances, subsidized recreational facilities etc.: To this extent it does not seem to justify the term privileged. Perhaps the TAC see proximity to the CGIAR Secretariat as representing a privileged status. If so it is not made explicit.

It seems unreasonable to suggest that an institute still in its developmental phase should incur the expense and risk the disruption of its program which must be attendant on any such move merely to avoid a possible perception for which no evidence can be adduced. A similar argument might be advanced for ISNAR, yet this has been established in a developed country with full CGIAR support well after these reservations were expressed about IFPRI's location.

vi) Opportunity costs of moving

The above analysis suggests that it is difficult to identify long-term benefits from moving which can be quantified, and that the main gain is likely to be from closer contact with some problems and real situations in developing countries. This is of great importance but there may be less traumatic and costly ways of obtaining it than a move. The "negative advantages" which seem to be of considerable concern to the TAC and its review panel cannot easily be substantiated, and do not seem to us to warrant a move. Some seem to contradict other advice given to IFPRI by those bodies.

The benefits foregone as a result of moving are more tangible, and also of more immediate impact.

In the first place there are direct costs of moving, estimated by IFPRI's consultant in a range of \$280,000 - \$1 million depending on the new location and number of persons to be relocated. New Delhi, his best alternative to Washington ranges from \$630,000 to \$900,000. These costs are not enormous, but not insignificant either in the light of the current problems of mobilizing funds for an expanding CG system. They equal about a third of IFPRI's 1980 total budget. Because of financial stringency IFPRI has been unable to accumulate a working capital reserve fund. Unless the costs of moving the Institute are considered by the CGIAR to be a once-for-all capital charge to the system as a whole, and not simply to the donors to IFPRI, it seems likely that they would represent a serious set-back to IFPRI's research program.

Differences in operating costs are more difficult to adduce. Based simply on UNDP post adjustments Washington is somewhat above the mean of the ten cities reviewed by the Consultant (Annex 4) and New Delhi is the second lowest. We were not able to rework his Table to include data on other Centers costs where they were established in the countries listed, but it is the CG Secretariat's view that if IFPRI staff were to be accorded similar privileges, (which are not accorded in Washington), costs of the Institute being based in a developing country would be higher than Washington for all countries listed except Delhi and Bangkok. Those would be about the same as Washington. No major benefits can therefore be expected from moving in terms of operating costs.

In contrast, operating efficiency is likely to suffer. It is possible to disagree with Mr. Schaaf's weightings in his Table 1, although some of these seem to cancel each other out. For example some Trustees expressed reservations about the weighting of "exposure to realities of the developing world." Washington rates very low here, as also for its geographical balance within the CGIAR network (which in fact seems rather good). On the other hand it gets enormously high marks as a data base; and, given that the nearest major developing country is four hours flying away, perhaps an over-rated communications and travel rating.

It is also possible to argue with the impressions of conditions in different countries in Annex VI of the Schaaf report; for example the good telecommunications rating of Mexico City, the poor health rating of Cairo, the good schools in Abidjan, and the good everything in Washington. The excellent intellectual climate and good data base in Delhi is certainly under-rated. The use of numbers of international flights a day regardless of their duration or destination, which makes Cairo look so favourable and Washington relatively poor, is also clearly misleading.

Even so the overall conclusion of the analysis is quite pervasive, especially when taken together with the independent IFPRI assessment of computer facilities in the different countries.

The short-term disruptive effects of moving are likely to be considerable in any re-location to another country. They could be expected to be more severe in a country with a different working language, such as Abidjan, Rio, or Mexico City, than in one where English was the lingua franca. Moreover there would be a continuing problem for some time with incoming staff or interns, to the extent that it is necessary to learn a new language. This would also be more severe in countries with poor facilities and communications and limited educational facilities for local staff. These difficulties tend to be compounded by language problems. It is extremely difficult to estimate the effects of such constraints on the output of the Institute; but it seems likely that the Institute's work, and particularly its publications and information programs, might be set back at least a year by re-location. The effect on recruitment is unclear. The Consultant stresses that no existing staff indicated that they might leave the Institute if it moved: however, this may have been merely prudence. Even if no one left, the effects of re-location on new recruitment might be undesirable. If it were considerable a more severe set back to the research program could be expected.

In return for these disadvantages the only clear and immediate advantage is one of a better image. This is positive with respect to enhanced awareness of the conditions of developing countries, and might result in some new and interesting research initiatives. It is negative (non-association with developed country pressures; non-privileged position in CGIAR etc) in other respects. Whether this would result in positive benefits, i.e. more funding, is less certain.

Conclusion

Given that the Institute is relatively young and still evolving its research program and building up its staff and reputation, we do not believe that the detectable benefits justify the risks of setting back program development, quite apart from the actual costs of moving. There is no clear evidence either that operating efficiency would be increased, or that the objectives of the mandate would be better achieved by a move. If anything the indications are to the contrary.

Nevertheless, the countries of the Third World are evolving rapidly, and relative costs and other comparisons are changing. The escalating costs of air travel seem likely to become an increasing constraint on long overseas flights, as required to cover the World scene from Washington. A location which would enable a sufficient range of the most weighty problems from a developing country (such as Delhi), might eventually be more cost-effective. Computer publication and other facilities are also being improved in many developing countries. Inflation rates in the United States are rising, although still low compared even to recent performance in India.

We therefore recommend that IFPRI remain at its present location at least until it reaches full program development in 1985. By then it will have been in operation ten years, will have an established staff operating routines, stronger funding, and hopefully a global reputation. It could therefore move with greater confidence. The location question should then be re-examined in the light of current world economic conditions, problems, research needs and operating costs. It could be an appropriate subject for a quinquennial review mission to consider. Meanwhile the issue should be shelved to avoid disturbing the morale of the staff and the work of the Institute by continued uncertainties.