

**Document No:** SDR/TAC:IAR/98/17/Add.1  
**Distribution:** General  
**Date:** [            October 16, 1998

**International Centers Week 1998  
October 26 - 30  
Washington D.C.**

<b>Shaping the CGIAR's Future</b>
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**Addendum to SGRP External Review Report**

The Report of the First External Review of the SGRP was issued on September 15, 1998 as Document Number SDR/TAC:IAR/98/17. Attached are the transmittal letter from the TAC Chair and the CGIAR Executive Secretary to the Chairman of the CGIAR, TAC's Commentary on the Review, the response of the Inter-Centre Working Group on Genetic Resources (ICWG-GR) and the response of IPGRI and its Board of Trustees to the Review Report, and an updated Appendix IV.

## Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

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TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Donald Winkelmann, Chairman

12<sup>th</sup> October 1998

Dear Mr. Serageldin,

I am pleased to submit to you the report of the First External Review of the System-wide Genetic Resources Programme (SGRP) which was conducted during January-August 1998 under the chairmanship of Dr. Jaap Hardon of The Netherlands. The Review Report was considered by TAC at its 75<sup>th</sup> Meeting held at CIMMYT in September in the presence of the Panel Chair. SGRP was represented by its Programme Leader, Dr. Geoffrey Hawtin, Director-General of IPGRI, the convening Centre; Dr. Joel Cohen, Chair of the ICWG-GR; and Dr. Jane Toll, Coordinator, SGRP Secretariat.

While this was the first external review of a System-wide Programme, it was by no means the first examination of the issue of genetic resources in the CGIAR System. The Panel had the benefit not only of interactions with the convening Centre and its Board of Trustees, the ICWG-GR, and a broad range of other actors in this sector, but also of the Stripe Review of 1994, the External Review of CGIAR Genebank Operations of 1996, and previous EPMRs of IBPGR and IPGRI.

The Panel thoroughly evaluated SGRP's performance, covering a broad range of topics including the policy environment for global genetic resources; the mission, strategy, governance, resourcing, and accomplishments of SGRP; and options for enhancing and strengthening the role of the Programme in the future.

In considering this Report, TAC focused on what it judged to be the most critical issues facing SGRP, mindful that the outcome of the System Review may affect future governance of genetic resources in the CGIAR. TAC's commentary, therefore, addresses recommendations aimed at improving the performance of SGRP but not matters of structure and governance. Specifically, TAC endorsed the Panel's recommendations on monitoring and analyzing policy decisions at national, regional and global levels; preparing a strategic plan with prioritized objectives and areas of research/activity; and making SINGER more user-friendly and user-responsive to a wider range of stakeholders. TAC also acknowledged that a new structure might be needed for SGRP, but decided to revisit this issue in the light of the outcome of the System Review.

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Mr. Ismail Serageldin  
CGIAR Chair

World Bank  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20433 USA

Finally, the Committee emphasized that SGRP's functions in the areas of policy, representation, information, and public awareness remained critical to the CGIAR and should be implemented on a priority basis, particularly the maintenance of all in-trust materials at acceptable international standards. In TAC's judgement, and pending the outcome of the System Review, careful consideration should be given to having these priorities carried out by IPGRI, with ICWG-GR serving as an advisory body to the Institute.

In addition to the Report of the Panel, there are two attachments to this letter. The first contains the joint response of SGRP and ICWG-GR to the Report; the second, the response of IPGRI and its Board of Trustees.

The general conclusion emerging from the Review is that, while much has been achieved in developing a System-wide approach to genetic resources, there is need for more coherence in genetic resources policies and actions. Various options have been proposed to strengthen SGRP's governance. These will no doubt attract the attention of the Group as it considers the Report at ICW'98.

Sincerely yours,

*Alexander von der Osten*

Alexander von der Osten  
Executive Secretary, CGIAR

*Donald L. Winkelmann*

Donald L. Winkelmann  
TAC Chair

## TAC COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE SYSTEM-WIDE GENETIC RESOURCES PROGRAMME

The report of the First External Review of the System-wide Genetic Resources Programme (SGRP) was discussed at TAC 75 in the presence of the Panel Chair, Dr. Jaap Hardon; Dr. Geoffrey Hawtin, Director-General of IPGRI, the SGRP Convening Centre; Dr. Joel Cohen, Chair of the Inter-Centre Working Group on Genetic Resources; and Dr. Jane Toll, Coordinator, SGRP Secretariat.

TAC expresses its thanks to the Chair and members of the Panel for a thorough, candid, and thought-provoking review and assessment of SGRP's performance since its inception in 1994 as one of the CGIAR's System-wide programmes. It also wishes to thank SGRP and the Inter-Centre Working Group on Genetic Resources (ICWG-GR), as well as IPGRI for making available to TAC 75 their respective comments on the Review Report. In preparing its commentary, TAC also benefited from the views expressed by FAO and individual Centres.

The Review's terms of reference charged the Panel with assessing SGRP in terms of its role in positioning the CGIAR within the global genetic resources effort. The Panel was to evaluate the Programme's performance of its mandated functions, covering a broad range of topics including the policy environment for global genetic resources; the mission, strategy, governance, resourcing, and accomplishments of SGRP; and options for enhancing and strengthening the role of the Programme in the future.

In considering this Report, TAC is mindful that certain of the recommendations of the System Review to be considered at ICW'98 may affect the future governance of the CGIAR in various sectors, including that of genetic resources. Inasmuch as the recommendations of the SGRP Review also have implications for governance, TAC decided to focus its current deliberations only on those recommendations aimed at improving the performance of SGRP without reference to matters of structure and governance. Consideration of the Panel's recommendations on Centre and System level issues are therefore held in abeyance, pending the outcome of the discussion from the System Review. The Group will, of course, have the benefit of the Panel's recommendations on the latter issues when the Report is tabled at ICW'98.

Of the Report's 18 recommendations, Nos. 3, 8, 9 and 13 relate critically to the major functions assigned to SGRP:

***Recommendation 3: The Panel recommends that the SGRP should continue to monitor policy decisions at national, regional and global levels, as well as identify needs and opportunities arising from such decisions, so that appropriate actions can be taken by the CGIAR in a Systemwide fashion. In addition, the SGRP should be involved in the analysis of the consequences for developing countries of proposed and agreed policies.***

***Recommendation 8: The Panel recommends that the SGRP prepare a strategic plan with prioritized objectives and areas of research/activity.***

***Recommendation 9: The Panel recommends that a new SGRP structure be developed for achieving greater functional effectiveness and efficiency in Systemwide cooperation in GR activities in the CGIAR.***

***Recommendation 13: The Panel recommends that SINGER be made more user-friendly and user-responsive to a wider range of stakeholders.***

TAC wishes to endorse the above recommendations and in particular to emphasize the importance of SGRP's sharply defining its priorities and strategies in relation to its mission. While TAC acknowledges that a new structure might be needed for the Programme, the Committee reiterates its desire to revisit this issue in the light of possible changes in governance resulting from the System Review. In addition, TAC offers the following commentary to supplement the Panel's report:

SGRP's antecedents lie in the Group's earlier extensive deliberations on the need for System-wide coordination of genetic resources activities to enable the CGIAR to develop, adopt and take unified positions and actions on genetic resources issues at national, regional, and global levels. In light of the findings of the External Review on SGRP's performance thus far, TAC considers that the most urgent tasks requiring the Programme's attention and action are:

1. To assist Centres in fulfilling their obligations as trustees of their respective *ex-situ* collections of agricultural, forestry, and aquatic genetic resources. This task involves improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the following SGRP activities:

*policy:* development of policies and tools relating to the conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture in support of implementation of the FAO-CGIAR Agreements.

*representation:* development of technical and policy positions for purposes of appropriately representing the CGIAR in the various global fora dealing with issues of genetic resources for food and agriculture;

*information:* ensuring the widespread availability of accurate, up-to-date information on genetic resources for food and agriculture, especially as pertains to the in-trust collections;

*public awareness:* increasing awareness, especially among policy-makers, of the importance of conserving genetic resources for food and agriculture and of using genetic resources as a basis for development;

*training:* development of training programmes in the management of genetic resources for food and agriculture.

2. To formulate a minimum standard for genetic resources facilities and a set of guidelines for upgrading the facilities so as to keep them at acceptable international norms.

TAC maintains its position that these tasks remain critical and should be implemented on a priority basis. It is especially crucial that all in-trust materials be kept in facilities meeting the standards of FAO's Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The need to upgrade such facilities should be identified wherever appropriate.

In light of the review's findings, TAC urges a more rigorous implementation of the mandated objectives of SGRP. The Committee agrees with the Panel's view that the Programme's present structure might not be conducive to achieving the desired results. In TAC's judgement, and pending the outcome of ICW'98's discussion of the System Review, careful consideration should be given to having the priorities identified above carried out by IPGRI, with ICWG-GR serving as an advisory body to the Institute.

Donald L. Winkelmann  
Chair, Technical Advisory Committee  
355 East Palace Avenue  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
USA

10 September 1998

Dear Dr Winkelmann

**ICWG-GR Response to the First External Programme and Management Review  
of the CGIAR System-wide Genetic Resources Programme**

We are pleased to attach herewith the response of the Inter-Centre Working Group on Genetic Resources (ICWG-GR) to the report of the External Programme and Management Review of the CGIAR System-wide Genetic Resources Programme (SGRP).

The response has received direct input to its formulation from almost all Centres and has been widely endorsed by them. In addition to this response, individual Centres and FAO have been invited to add their own commentaries.

Many thanks for giving us the opportunity to comment on the report.

Yours sincerely

*Geoffrey Hawtin*

Geoffrey Hawtin  
Programme Leader, SGRP

*Joel Cohen*

Joel Cohen  
Chairman, ICWG-GR

**Response of the  
Inter-Centre Working Group on Genetic Resources  
to the Report of the  
First External Programme and Management Review  
of the  
*CGIAR System-wide Genetic Resources Programme (SGRP)***

1. The Inter-Centre Working Group on Genetic Resources (ICWG-GR) would like to take this opportunity to thank Jaap Hardon and the External Programme and Management Review Panel for a thought-provoking report and the useful set of recommendations that it contains. We recognise that the task assigned the Panel was far from easy and the fact that it was able to come to grips with some of the complexities of the SGRP and address various of the key issues it faces, attests to the dedication and professionalism of the Panel members.
2. This response contains the collective reaction of the ICWG-GR to the Report. It starts by addressing a few overarching issues and then provides the Group's response to each of the Panel's individual recommendations. As a collective response, it highlights those points with which the Group as a whole is in broad - though not necessarily unanimous - agreement. In addition, the Centres have also been invited to supplement this with their own individual responses, and in particular, to raise issues for the attention of the CGIAR on which it has not been possible to reach a consensus among all the Centres themselves.
3. We fully share the Panel's perspective on the importance of the SGRP and the need for it to continue - and to be strengthened. We are proud of the achievements, perhaps understated in the Report, that the Programme has been able to make in the short time of its existence. We agree with the Panel's view that the central objectives of the Programme should remain: a) to help ensure that the Centres' genetic resources policies are developed and applied uniformly (especially in relation to the in-trust collections), b) that to the extent necessary, the Centres apply consistent and coherent strategies, c) to promote a united position at international fora - especially those concerned with the development and monitoring of international policy, and d) to facilitate and catalyse the Centres to become more active and effective players in the context of the overall global effort on the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources.



4. We are concerned that the Review may have served to confirm the confusion that exists within and outside the CGIAR, between the definition of SGRP as a programme encompassing all genetic resources activities within the CGIAR versus the coordinating and facilitating functions - the glue that holds the GR work of the Centres together and that aims to ensure that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts – for which SGRP receives a specific allocation of funds. This critical distinction between SGRP-broad and SGRP-narrow is unfortunately not clear throughout the Report.
5. We are somewhat disappointed that the Panel did not address one of the key issues facing the Programme - the need for a clearer definition of its boundaries. A lack of agreement within the CGIAR as to what should be included within the SGRP - and conversely what should be excluded - has served to limit programme cohesion in the past. To what extent should the Programme include, e.g. pre-breeding, participatory breeding, biosafety issues and *in situ*/ecosystem management? Indeed the Report makes more suggestions on additional areas to include rather than advising on focus and ways to define boundaries that are both comprehensive enough to ensure a buy-in from all Centres yet focussed enough to ensure impact.
6. We also note that the Report concentrates very heavily on plant (especially crop) genetic resources and the role of the Centres in relation to the *ex situ* in trust collections. While we fully share the Panel's perspective on the great importance of these aspects of the Programme, we are disappointed that other areas - including aquatic, livestock, forest and microbial genetic resources - are given less attention than they deserve in the Report.
7. A major problem for the Programme, and one that has severely limited its effectiveness in the past, has been the lack of adequate funding. At no time has available funding reached the level recommended by TAC. We are pleased to note the Panel's comments in this respect and trust that members of the CGIAR will react positively to calls for increased financial support.
8. The ICWG-GR recognises that there have been, and continue to be, issues facing the Programme that have proven to be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to resolve through current mechanisms. While responsibility for convening the Programme has been vested in IPGRI, clear authority rests with no one. We agree that the ICWG-GR's strength lies primarily in its technical expertise and believe that any future governance mechanisms should continue to build on this. We also share the view that it would be useful for there to be a "higher" body which would be responsible for such aspects as endorsing policies for adoption and implementation by the Centres, resolving inter-Centre conflicts, approving programme boundaries and endorsing strategic plans. We believe that such a body needs to have a very broad buy-in by the Centres themselves (through participation of Centre Directors and Centre Board members) as well as being broadly representative of the System as a whole.

Following are our comments on the specific recommendations of the Panel:

9. Recommendation 1. We agree that each Centres' species/genepool objectives and strategies should be clear, documented and publicised. We concur that this is of particular importance with respect to Centres' *ex situ* conservation commitments to mandate crops and in trust plant germplasm collections, but note that it is also relevant with regard to Centres' conservation objectives, *ex situ* and *in situ*, with respect to priority livestock, aquatic, microbial and non-mandate plant species.
10. Recommendation 2. We concur that the Centres and the genebank collections have an important role to play in the restoration of agricultural systems following disasters and we welcome the Panel's call for resources to aid this work. We draw attention to the coordinated efforts of Centres and partners, for example in Rwanda (Seeds of Hope) and in Somalia, and our offer to collaborate with FAO in putting into place an international standing capacity for disaster response. We also note that restoration is not limited to the re-introduction of genebank holdings, but also to pre-emptive collecting, the identification and sourcing of locally adapted materials, institution and human-capacity building, and the restoration of animal as well as plant genetic resources.
11. Recommendation 3. We agree and welcome the Panel's comments on the need to streamline decision-making on the formulation of genetic resources policy within the CGIAR. We also agree with the importance of helping developing countries to formulate policy options and to analyse their implications. We highlight the on-going work and capacity of IFPRI and IPGRI in this regard.
12. Recommendation 4. We agree in principle with this recommendation, noting that these issues were revealed by the internally-commissioned external review of CGIAR genebank operations. We draw attention to the following work that is underway:
  - as reported to the Panel, Centres have taken action to address technical and financial constraints
  - the ICWG-GR has tasked IFPRI to develop the parameters for costing genebank operations, and this activity, undertaken in collaboration with CIMMYT, is nearing completion
  - the ICWG-GR has tasked IPGRI to lead a study with stakeholders within and outside the CGIAR, on developing a scientifically sound and financially sustainable global genebank system (see Recommendation 6)
 We would, however, also like to point out that:
  - some Centres are facing severe financial constraints in fully meeting international genebank standards, as revealed by the genebank operations review
  - there is a clear need to consider the security and sustainability of the funding for the CGIAR collections in the context of the emerging global genetic resources system

13. Recommendation 5. The ICWG-GR agrees, noting that this was also a recommendation of the review of CGIAR genebank operations and that in response:  
individual Centres are taking action to complete safety duplication within technical, time and funding limitations  
Centres' research efforts on cryopreservation and *in vitro* culture are in part to expedite safety duplication  
the ICWG-GR has identified quarantine regulations as a constraint to black box safety duplication, and has tasked IPGRI to explore protocols for overcoming this that are in line with national and international agreements
14. Recommendation 6. We welcome this recommendation. As mentioned above, the purpose of this activity is to explore with other stakeholders the financial and operational arrangements for a rational and sustainable global genebank system.
15. Recommendation 7. We fully agree with this recommendation, aware that a lack of funds is preventing some Centres from timely implementation of the recommendations of the genebank operations review.
16. Recommendation 8. Although, as recognized by the Panel, the SGRP has developed objectives, strategies and criteria, we agree with the need to develop them further. This is needed particularly to enable resources to be allocated more effectively to SGRP (narrow-sense) priorities.
17. Recommendation 9. See paragraph 8 above.
18. Recommendation 10. We agree that we can further improve the process by which we select activities to which to allocate funds. Measures taken in response to recommendations 8 and 9 can be expected to improve the process. However, we point out that SGRP's limited funds are allocated to support its coordination function and to "seed" collaborative activities or lever additional resources. In addition, the process is made more difficult by the inability of the SGRP, given current financial uncertainties, to develop accurate funding projections.
19. Recommendation 11. Research on livestock genetic resources remains a priority activity for ILRI and is receiving increasing attention at ICARDA. However, we agree with the need expressed by the Panel for a stronger CGIAR contribution to global developments on animal genetic resources. The means by which this objective can best be achieved, including through SGRP, will be discussed and agreed by the Centres concerned, in consultation with FAO.
20. Recommendation 12. We agree. The SGRP, broad-sense, encompasses all of the genetic resources activities of the CGIAR and has, therefore, a comprehensive coverage. However, since the CBD requires an integrated approach, the ICWG-GR also seeks opportunities to promote and facilitate cross-sectoral actions. The allocation of SGRP's collaborative efforts and funding depends on relative priorities, the extent of existing efforts and on opportunities to lever additional resources. All of these will vary from year to year and across sectors.

21. Recommendation 13. We agree. Efforts to make SINGER more friendly and responsive to users, outside as well as within the CGIAR, are already underway with the initiation, in June 1998, of the second phase of the development of SINGER.

22. Recommendation 14. We fully concur with the need to keep abreast of policies and regulations regarding the ownership and availability of the information that may be compiled in Centre and SGRP databases. Currently, the information in SINGER is available without restriction in compliance with the FAO Agreements governing the in trust collections.

23. Recommendation 15. While agreeing with this recommendation, we wish to draw attention to the on-going work on biodiversity and gender issues by member Centres of the SGRP, some of which has been described and publicised in SGRP publications. We plan to explore with the System-wide Programme on Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (SWP-PR&GA), opportunities to strengthen research on gender in relation to the conservation and use of biodiversity. However, we also draw attention to the question of SGRP boundaries raised earlier in this report.

24. Recommendation 16. We agree that policy research and capacity strengthening warrant more resources and attention. However, we wish to point out the on-going activities of member Centres in such efforts, for example in the programmes of ISNAR, IFPRI and IPGRI, as well as the activities conducted through the SGRP. The ICWG-GR has identified policy research and capacity strengthening as two key areas of work for the SGRP and we agree that we should devote more attention to achieving effective collaboration in these areas.

25. Recommendation 17. We fully agree with the importance the Panel attaches to networks. We view networks, both regional and genepool-orientated as important in the furtherance of the global effort and as vehicles for harnessing and delivering the Centres' contributions. Networks can serve as a powerful mechanism to link those concerned primarily with conservation with those whose main concern is with the use of genetic resources. An assessment of the scope and effectiveness of the various types of networks in which the Centres currently participate, could give useful pointers to ways to strengthen collaboration both among Centres themselves and between the Centres, NARS, and other partners.

26. Recommendation 18. We recognise the important continuum of activity from conservation to use and the interfaces between *ex situ* and *in situ*/on farm management of genetic resources and their improvement. Consequently, we aim to promote the exchange of information and expertise between the programmes and scientists engaged in these areas. However, this again is a boundary issue. We are conscious that on farm crop improvement and participatory breeding is mostly conducted by Centres' crop improvement programmes and the SWP-PR&GA. We are also mindful of the Panel's recommendation on the need for SGRP to better focus its objectives and areas of activity. We thus do not consider that SGRP should include participatory plant breeding within its programme, other than maintaining the necessary information and germplasm flows to the relevant Centre and System programmes.

Dr Donald L. Winkelmann  
TAC Chair  
355 East Palace Ave.  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
USA

16 September 1998

Dear Don

### **IPGRI's commentary on the report of the external review of SGRP**

The Board of Trustees and Management of IPGRI would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Hardon and the members of the External Review Panel for their helpful report. We would also like to thank TAC for this opportunity to comment.

We support the response to the review that was provided by the Inter-Centre Working Group on Genetic Resources (ICWG-GR). We would also like to supplement that response with a few additional observations and suggestions.

As the ICWG-GR response points out, the report fails to adequately differentiate between the SGRP broadly defined, which includes all the CGIAR's activities on genetic resources, and the SGRP narrowly defined, which includes only those elements principally concerned with system-wide and inter-centre co-ordination, collaboration, representation and information. This is unfortunate as a lack of clarity on this difference is causing considerable confusion within and outside the CGIAR. To differentiate between these two, we propose to refer to the former as the CGIAR Genetic Resources Agenda (CGRA) and reserve the term SGRP for the narrower definition.

We believe that the ICWG-GR should, based on its technical competence, continue to be the steering committee of the SGRP, but only in this narrow sense. We also see it reporting to the "higher body" that has been proposed by the Panel. This higher body would be responsible for oversight of the overall CGIAR Genetic Resources Agenda (CGRA), of which SGRP (narrow sense) is a part.

One option suggested in the report is for the higher body to be constituted as a "Board" with full governance responsibilities over the CGRA. Although such a body would be able to make authoritative decisions, we also recognise that it is important for Centres to maintain responsibility for the day-to-day management of their genetic resources programmes, including providing for their funding. Centres also need to be able to ensure that strong links are maintained between their genebanks and other activities dependent on the genetic resources they contain.

Thus, in order to respect the need to maintain Centre autonomy, while at the same time strengthening mechanisms for system-wide programme and policy oversight and monitoring (especially in relation to the in-trust agreements signed with FAO), we agree with the Review Panel's option that the higher-level body be constituted as a widely representative Committee. It could report to both the CGIAR and the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources. It should have clear terms of reference and include representatives of all major stakeholder groups: Centre Directors, Centre Boards, FAO, ICWG-GR, TAC, NARS, private sector, NGOs, and donors. It might also take over the functions of the current Genetic Resources Policy Committee.

The terms of reference of such a genetic resources oversight committee might thus include the following:

- to maintain an overview of policy, legal and ethical issues and developments regarding genetic resources - within the CGIAR, nationally and internationally - and recommend appropriate action to the Centres and to the CGIAR as a whole, with the aim of promoting and optimising the CGIAR's contribution to the global genetic resources system.

- to oversee policy and strategic aspects of the CGIAR's Genetic Resources Agenda (CGRA), including endorsing policies for adoption and implementation by the Centres, and the further development and monitoring of the agreements with FAO, including reporting on a regular basis to both the CGIAR and the FAO Commission on their implementation.

- to oversee the implementation of SGRP (narrow sense) through such activities as helping to resolve boundary issues and endorsing its strategic plans

- to identify issues that require system-wide attention and approaches, and to help ensure that appropriate action is taken by the relevant parties, particularly within the context of SGRP.

We considered in some detail the two alternative structures proposed by the panel: a) that the IPGRI Board assume the added responsibility of oversight of CGRA or b) that CGRA become fully integrated within IPGRI. We believe that neither of these options are feasible. Apart from issues of Centres' autonomy and programme ownership, we believe it is essential that there be a broad buy-in to any solution by all of the CGRA's stakeholders. Such a buy-in is very unlikely to be achieved through either of the proposed structures as the IPGRI Board mainly comprises, and should continue to comprise, individuals who are elected in their individual capacities and are not appointed as representatives by the different stakeholder groups.

As pointed out above, we believe the ICWG-GR should continue to act as the technical steering committee of the SGRP (narrow sense). However, to be more effective in this role, we believe that ICWG-GR members should be granted greater authority to make appropriate decisions on behalf of their Centres. Also that members should be in a position to act more effectively as focal points within their own institution and to be more active in linking with all Centre staff concerned with genetic resources.

We believe it is appropriate for IPGRI to continue to serve as convening centre of SGRP. In addition, to help ensure effective co-ordination of the work of the ICWG-GR and that of the proposed higher level oversight committee, we are pleased to offer IPGRI's support to such a committee through the provision of secretariat services. We feel that it is important that such support be provided by IPGRI in a pro-active manner (e.g. through conducting supporting studies or preparing background documents), based on our expertise and extensive involvement with the genetic resources community worldwide.

Finally we believe that the SGRP (narrow sense) unlike many other system-wide programmes, should continue to be much more than just a funding mechanism for collaborative research and related activities. We see its primary responsibilities to be more in the areas of joint strategy development, coordination of on-going activities in areas of common interest, information, representation and public awareness. Nevertheless the persistent problem of under-funding has served to severely constrain the SGRP's (narrow-sense) activities and hence its outputs and impact.

We trust these comments will be helpful to you. We are confident that the governance mechanism proposed here, if adopted, would serve both to increase the SGRP's effectiveness and to strengthen the contribution of the CGIAR to the evolving global genetic resources system.

Yours sincerely

**Marcio de Miranda Santos**

**Geoffrey Hawtin**

Marcio de Miranda Santos  
Chair, IPGRI Board of Trustees

Geoffrey Hawtin  
Director General

Info copy: Dr Shellemiah Keya  
TAC Executive Secretary