April 20, 2000

Dear Colleagues:

Meeting of the Consultative Council, April 10, 2000, Rome

The visioning exercise launched at International Centers Week (ICW99) moved another step forward, when the Consultative Council reviewed TAC’s draft vision paper at its April 10 meeting in Rome.

TAC’s current vision paper will shortly be distributed to all CGIAR members. However, following up the Consultative Council’s discussions, TAC will prepare additional materials (to take us further towards making choices) for consideration by the Consultative Council on Saturday, May 20 in Dresden. Thereafter, the Council will submit recommendations for decision-making by the Group as a whole at MTM2000. The Group will, as well, be able to take note of the views expressed and the decisions reached at the GFAR meeting preceding MTM.

The CGIAR decisions at MTM, combined with the aspirations and needs of our national and regional partners, will guide TAC’s next priority setting exercise.

Poverty Focus

TAC Chair Emil Javier introduced TAC’s draft vision to the Consultative Council in a presentation that covered the process by which TAC’s conclusions were reached, the challenges and opportunities ahead of the CGIAR, and the means by which those challenges could be confronted and the opportunities grasped.

Six key principles form the core of the proposed vision:

- A strong and unremitting focus on poverty alleviation,
- Commitment to bring modern science to bear on the attainment of the new vision,
- Priority to South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa where most of the world’s poor live,
- Regional approaches to research planning,
- Close integration of CGIAR activities with those of partners in the developing regions, including partners engaged in development work, and
- The creation of Task Forces drawn from various centers to work on specific issues that can benefit from a multidisciplinary approach. Task Forces would complement the work of the centers and, to be effective, would need to be fully funded.

Emil’s thoughtful and well-designed presentation led to a compelling and businesslike discussion. A range of viewpoints were expressed, and a number of suggestions offered, all of them clearly directed at sharpening the focus and deepening the substance of the CGIAR’s work. Interaction between Council members and the TAC Chair helped to clarify the issues raised. Overall, the spirit of the meeting was open and constructive.

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In brief:

- Emil Javier and TAC were commended for following an inclusive and participatory process. In doing so, they had enriched TAC's perspectives, and encouraged a sense of ownership of the final product among stakeholders.
- The broad principles of the proposed vision were endorsed. Consultative Council members suggested, however, that the strategic choices open to the CGIAR should be defined more sharply. The CGIAR cannot do everything for everybody.
- The heartland of the CGIAR -- a core, long-term program of public goods research -- must be defined and protected. The conservation and use of germplasm would be a central part of such a program. Recommitment by members to support a long-term program is a necessary condition for its effectiveness.
- Approaches to the adoption of cutting-edge science (e.g. functional genomics, the use of information technology) should be articulated in practical terms.
- Involvement of partners in regional priority setting was widely accepted.
- A “laissez faire” or market-based approach, in which centers formulate and undertake programs outside the core agenda, was considered inappropriate. However, the general feeling was that this approach will not disappear. The CGIAR vision should take note of this fact, and assess how the heartland can be protected while “rules of the game” for additional activities are developed.

Way Forward

The Consultative Council agreed that additional materials were needed from TAC. These would embody the points made in Rome, and set out clear strategic choices, along with their rationale. This would help to move the discussion forward.

Specifically, Council members and the TAC Chair agreed that the next communication from TAC to the Consultative Council will provide materials which would enable the Council (and also the CGIAR at MTM) to:

- Narrow down and sharply focus the research agenda,
- Give the centers specific guidelines on how and with whom to carry out activities involving the new science. This will require further attention to the management of IPR issues,
- Understand in detail the operation of the proposed Task Forces,
- Re-emphasize the CGIAR relationship with partners and clients,
- Include the goal of reversing environmental degradation among the tasks of integrated natural resource management.

The TAC Chair and his colleagues are working on the recast paper now, and I expect them to complete the task fairly soon. This paper will be sent to all MTM2000 participants as soon as it is ready.

CGIAR Finances

The system's finances were discussed against the background of the European Commission's default on its 1999 commitments which threatened to impose severe
burdens on several centers. The Finance Committee has taken action to ease the
burden, but concerns persist both about EC funding itself and about the system's
finances in general. Strenuous efforts have been made to protect future EC funding,
and EC representative Philippe Vialatte explained how the processes were working.
John Riggan, who has been assisting the working group (chaired by Alex McCalla) that
is planning a longer-term financing strategy, presented an interim report to the Council.
As I have said before, financing issues continue to present the CGIAR system with
critical challenges, and I will address these issues again at MTM.

Composition of the Consultative Council

In response to the view expressed at ICW99 that the Consultative Council should be
reduced in size, the CGIAR Secretariat prepared for discussion at Rome a briefing note
that traced the origin and functioning of the Council, and outlined the following four
options for it's future composition:

- Maintenance of the status quo, a 31-member Council, as an interim measure,
  through the vision and structuring exercise,
- A Council of 21-members,
- A Council of 15 members, and
- Dissolution of the Council and its replacement with a mechanism appropriate to
  whatever program of restructuring is adopted by the Group.

As there is need for continuity while the visioning exercise is underway, the Council
agreed that it would recommend to the Group that the present Council should continue
to function through ICW2000. At ICW2000 a new, smaller Council could be adopted.

Search for CGIAR Director

Council members sought and received a status report on the search for the new CGIAR
Director, i.e. the successor to Alexander von der Osten. The search process is now
underway. Bob Thompson who, as the Bank's representative to the cosponsor group,
chairs the Selection Committee, explained that the process had been delayed for some
time because the position had to be redefined to ensure that it would attract a caliber of
applicants able to take over some of the leadership duties of the Chairman when I have
ended my term.

MTM2000

The next Mid-Term Meeting is only a few weeks away. The agenda presents us with an
opportunity to make decisive choices that will guide the CGIAR and ensure its
effectiveness for many years to come. I look forward to working with you, as we reach
out towards those decisions.

Sincerely,

(Original signed)
Ismail Serageldin
Chairman, CGIAR
Attachments:
   Agenda
   List of Participants

Distribution List:
   Heads of Delegation
   Board Chairs
   Center Directors General
   TAC Chair, Members and Executive Secretary
   Genetic Resources Policy Committee Chair
   NGO Committee Chair
   Private Sector Committee Chair
   Science Partnership Committee Chair
Meeting of the
CGIAR Consultative Council
FAO Headquarters, Rome
April 10, 2000

AGENDA

1. Introduction
   - Introductory remarks by Mr. Serageldin
   - Adoption of the agenda

2. Vision for the CGIAR--Overview
   - Presentation of the draft paper by TAC Chair
   - Comments from the centers (CBC and CDC)
   - General reactions of CC members to the proposals from TAC

3. Vision for the CGIAR—Discussion of Elements
   - Discussion/brainstorm by the CC on the elements of the vision
     3.a Mission and goals
     3.b What the CGIAR should be doing and producing
     3.c How the CGIAR should be doing it
     3.d With whom the CGIAR should be doing it

4. Financial Outlook for the CGIAR
   4.a Update on CGIAR Finances
      - Update by FC Chair and CGIAR Chair
      - Discussion
   4.b Long-term Financing Strategy
      - Presentation of draft strategy
      - Discussion

5. Composition of the Consultative Council
   - Discussion

6. Consultative Council Report to the CGIAR
   - Review of a synthesis of discussions

7. Other Business
   - Search Process for Director, CGIAR

8. Chairman's Summary of Conclusions and Next Steps
CGIAR Consultative Council Meeting
April 10, 2000
List of Participants

CGIAR Chairman
Ismail Serageldin

CGIAR Members – North
Canada – Iain MacGillivray
Germany – H-Jochen de Haas
Japan – Tetsushi Kondo
The Netherlands – Klaas Tamminga
Sweden – Carl-Gustav Thornstrom
Switzerland – Paul Egger
USA – Emmy Simmons

CGIAR Members – South
Brazil – Francisco Reifschneider
China – Liang Qu
Colombia – Juan L. Restrepo
Iran – Mohammad H. Rozitalab
The Philippines – Eliseo R. Ponce
Uganda – Joseph K. Mukiibi

Multilateral Organizations and Foundations
European Commission – Philippe Vialatte
International Fund for Agricultural Development – Shantanu Mathur
Rockefeller Foundation – Bob Herdt

Cosponsors
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN – Jacques Eckebil
World Bank – Robert L. Thompson

Standing Committees
Oversight Committee – Andrew Bennett
Finance Committee – Iain MacGillivray
Technical Advisory Committee – Emil Javier
Private Sector Committee – Sam Dryden
NGO Committee – Miguel Altieri
Science Partnership Committee – Werner Arber
Committee of Board Chairs – Kurt Peters, Robert Havener
Center Directors Committee – Geoff Hawtin, Jeff Sayer

Resource Persons
Executive Secretary, CGIAR – Alexander von der Osten
TAC Secretariat – Shellemiah Keya, Guido Gryseels
CGIAR Secretariat – Selcuk Ozgediz, Ravi Tadvalkar, Ernest Corea
Working Group on Longer-Term Financing Strategy – John Riggan

Observer
Executive Secretary, CDC – Jean-Pierre Jacqmotte