

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER TO HEADS OF DELEGATION

Dear Colleagues:

The interlocked activities described in my letter of August 15 have been successfully completed. They consisted of meetings of a Study Panel on governance and finance chaired by Klaus Winkel, a Stakeholder Panel chaired by M.S. Swaminathan, meetings of the Oversight and Finance Committees and of the Steering Committee, and a panel on Intellectual Property Protection chaired by M.S. Swaminathan. Together, they have covered much ground in preparing the way for International Centers Week (ICW) and for next year's High Level International Conference. The revitalization process is well on its way.

The consultations were held against the background of several important developments arising from the movement for change that was shaped at the New Delhi Mid-Term Meeting. As a result of additional funding from donors and the availability of matching funds from the World Bank, the 1994 core program is now fully funded. The centers are attuned to the need for refocussing their agenda and for planning in terms of systemwide programs. Developing country perspectives are being increasingly brought into CGIAR deliberations. Overall, there is agreement on the need to move swiftly in new directions.

The nature of the recent consultations and the names of those who took part are listed in an attachment. On behalf of the CGIAR system, and personally as well, I thank all participants who contributed their time, experience and insights to these endeavors. Their work was exhaustive -- and exhausting. They reached no binding decisions, because that is the responsibility of the Group as a whole, but they distilled the issues in a manner conducive to decision making at ICW. When you have examined the thrust of their discussions and suggestions, you will agree, I am sure, that they demonstrated how effectively decision making can be improved without any infringement of the rights and obligations of the full Group membership.

The objective of the revitalization process is to launch the "new" CGIAR within the timeframe adopted at New Delhi. The emphasis on revitalization does not imply that we will impetuously turn our backs on the solid achievements of the past. We are pursuing renewal, recommitment and rededication. To secure these goals, we should preserve and enhance existing strengths, so as to sharpen the effectiveness of the CGIAR system as an instrument of development.

In this spirit, the recent consultations reaffirmed the wisdom of building on the bedrock of characteristics that define the CGIAR in substance, form, practice and, indeed, reputation:

- The ***nonpolitical approach*** that enables the system to concentrate on substance and outcomes;
- The unremitting commitment to ***scientific quality and excellence*** in research;
- A clearly ***focussed research agenda*** which enables the centers to be effective in specified areas where they have a comparative advantage;
- The ***long-term nature*** of the enterprise as accepted by donors who recognize the international character of the public goods produced by CGIAR centers; and
- The ***absence of a juridical structure*** or legal personality and the concomitant reliance on donor goodwill.

The consultations resulted in the articulation of a clear view of the CGIAR, its role in a global agricultural and environmental research system, and its reliance on a range of partners in both developed and developing countries for the successful operation of its role. The emphasis was on a more "open" CGIAR in which the system influences and is influenced by other major players. The consensus as I saw it was for decisive change in relation to:

- ***Governance*** -- the organization of a Global Forum, involving our partners to set the CGIAR agenda and complement the business meetings of the Group; widening CGIAR membership; more businesslike meetings; and an effective committee structure;
- ***Partnerships*** -- expanded developing country participation in CGIAR deliberations and agenda setting, as well as in research programs on the basis of full partnership with CGIAR centers and a stronger sense of "ownership" of the system;

- **Research Agenda** -- development of a sharply focussed research agenda, requiring the CGIAR to conduct strategic research in areas that are truly of international (trans-border) significance and in which CGIAR centers have a clear, comparative advantage;
- **Financial Mechanisms and Strategies** -- making a practical reality of the matrix that facilitates the setting of the research agenda, enhances transparency and accountability in financing the agenda (possibly on a multi-year basis) and brings predictability and stability to center operations; and
- **Impact of Research** -- developing a methodology for measuring impact, ensuring that the methodology is used and that impact-information is disseminated to stakeholders.

By any measure, this was a heavy program. Ideally, we would have proceeded at a more leisurely pace. But we do not have the luxury of time. The substance and timing of our current endeavors are dictated by the urgency of the revitalization process. The time available is only as much as we can prise out of the 18-month schedule and as little as is necessary to accomplish the requisite level of preparation.

The deliberations were of a representative character, involving all stakeholders -- cosponsors, donors, developing country representatives, NGO representatives, centers, TAC, non-CGIAR specialists, and the CGIAR Secretariat. Together, participants presented a formidable array of expertise. To ensure the transparency of the process, you will shortly receive the outcome of their consultations in several reports which will be distributed as ICW documents.

Following from the deliberations, we will have a package of five documents which, combined, can form the Manifesto for the New CGIAR for presentation to next year's High Level International Conference, after review and adoption at ICW. The Manifesto will be crucial to securing the rededication of the international community to supporting publicly-funded international agricultural research. The components of the Manifesto will be:

- an Overview Statement, encompassing the new vision of the CGIAR and summarizing the essence of the following four accompanying reports;
- the Paper on a Vision for the CGIAR, produced by the panel chaired by Gordon Conway;
- a Research Agenda for the Future;
- Governance Overhaul; and

- New Financing Arrangements.

You will receive, as well, a report from the Intellectual Property Protection Panel, whose proposals should help us to move towards drafting a definitive policy. This will be an important subject for discussion at ICW when we hope to sign the agreement on plant genetic resources with FAO, and discuss the role of the Chairman as ambassador for the system in negotiating with the international bodies that are engaged in defining the future framework for plant genetic resources efforts.

Drawing up the ICW94 agenda was deferred until the recent consultations were concluded. The ICW agenda will be structured to concentrate on defining the "new" CGIAR in terms that are credible and persuasive. By doing so, we can present an irrefutable "case" for commitment and support to the High Level International Conference.

Much has been done. Much more remains ahead of us. Let us continue to strive together to reach our goals.

I look forward to working with you at ICW.

Sincerely,



Ismail Serageldin
Chairman

Attachment

cc: Board Chairs
Center Directors
TAC Chair
TAC Executive Secretary

PRE ICW94 CGIAR COMMITTEE/PANEL ATTENDANCE

CGIAR Study Panel

Winkel, Klaus (Chairman)
Bengtsson, Bo
Bennett, Andrew
O'Hare, Donal
Pearson, Susan
Pineiro, Martin
Winkelmann, Donald

CGIAR Stakeholder Panel

Swaminathan, M.S. (Chairman)
Blake, Amb. Robert
Bonte-Friedheim, Christian
Dillon, John
Egger, Paul
Haizel, K.A.
Lele, Uma
McCalla, Alex
Petit, Michel
Rothermel, Tim
Terry, Eugene
van den Berg, Rob
Wernli Kupfer, Claudio
Winkelmann, Don

CGIAR Steering Committee

Serageldin, I. (Chairman)

Oversight Committee

- Egger, Paul (Chairman)
- Carsalade, Henri
- Herdt, Robert
- Holmberg, Johan
- Lewis, John

Finance Committee

- IBRD, (Michel Petit) (Chairman)
- Australia (Eric Craswell)
- Canada (Iain MacGillivray)
- Denmark (Klaus Winkel)
- Japan (Kunio Nakamura)
- Philippines (Manuel Lantin)
- U.K. (Ian Haines)

CGIAR IPR Panel

Swaminathan, M.S. (Chairman)
Bengtsson, Bo
Best, Simon
Brader, Lukas
Correa, Carlos
Doyle, Jack
Duvick, Donald
El-Beltagy, Adel
Esquinas, Jose
Fraleigh, Brad
Juma, Calestous
Menon, Usha
Zimmermann, Maria