

*Research Partnerships to Protect the Environment,
Transform Agriculture, and Combat Poverty*



**Declaration and Plan of Action
for Global Partnership
in Agricultural Research**

Adopted at the
Global Forum on Agricultural Research
International Centers Week 1996
Washington, DC, USA
October 30-31, 1996

Declaration and Plan of Action for Global Partnership in Agricultural Research

The *Declaration and Plan of Action for Global Partnership in Agricultural Research* were adopted on October 31, 1996 at a Global Forum on Agricultural Research held as part of International Centers Week, the main annual meeting of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

Mr. Fawzi Al-Sultan, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, presided at the Global Forum, at which the various components in the global agricultural research system joined together for the first time to explore the needs and opportunities for agricultural research, the scope for collaboration, and practical measures to strengthen partnerships, in the interest of promoting sustainable agricultural development for food security.

The origins of the Global Forum lie in the recent efforts of the CGIAR to broaden its partnerships with national agricultural research systems (NARS), regional organizations, advanced research institutions, non-governmental organizations, universities, and the private sector, among others, and to increase the participation of the South in CGIAR decisionmaking. This process involved consultations with groups of NARS on the substance of research collaboration, the subsequent emergence of representative regional groupings, and, finally, a Global Forum.

Five key goals were emphasized by the Global Forum:

- to enhance the capacity of NARS to generate and transfer in a participatory mode appropriate technology that responds to the needs of the end users;
- to improve priority setting for a global framework for agricultural research;
- to strengthen NARS-NARS partnerships and the emerging regional fora;
- to develop partnerships among all partners in the global agricultural research community; and
- to secure financial support for implementing a *Plan of Action*.

CGIAR Chairman Ismail Serageldin described the adoption of the *Declaration* and *Plan of Action* as a “great step forward,” and stressed the need for action because “the problems that await the attention of the global agricultural research community are too urgent for unified attempts at their solution to be postponed.”

The *Declaration* and *Plan of Action* were tabled at the World Food Summit held in Rome, Italy on November 13-17, 1996.

Declaration

We, the representatives of the national agricultural research systems, regional and subregional organizations, universities, advanced research institutions, non-governmental organizations, farmers' organizations, the private sector, and international agricultural research centers, gathered in a Global Forum on Agricultural Research at the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, International Centers Week 1996:

Cognizant of the formidable challenges of the future, in particular the need:

- to alleviate poverty;
- to increase productivity and resource use efficiency to feed an expanding population; and
- to address environmental degradation, sustainably manage the natural resource base, and develop and implement more appropriate agricultural policies and sustainable technologies;

Aware that the world leaders are holding a summit to address the global challenge of ensuring food security;

Convinced that scientific and technological responses and sociocultural factors are essential elements in improving food and nutritional security, as well as more sustainable use of cropland, rangeland, aquatic, and forest resources;

Realizing that the national agricultural research systems are the cornerstones of the emerging global research system; and

Recognizing that current cooperative research arrangements need to be adjusted to meet challenges of unprecedented nature and magnitude:

Hereby affirm our strong commitment to contribute to the development of productive, sustainable, and equitable agriculture. We recognize the crucial role played by farmers, especially women, in agriculture and natural resources management. We agree to work in partnership with them toward their empowerment, building on their indigenous knowledge systems.

We fully recognize the immense value of collaboration and research partnership and urge that such collaboration be governed by the principles of subsidiarity, participatory decisionmaking, complementarity of efforts, adaptability, openness, and, above all, a deep sense of commitment to the common purpose. We agree to meet the challenges of the present and the future through an efficient, effective, and coherent global agricultural research system.

Plan of Action

We commit ourselves to undertake the following actions, in the pursuit of our common objectives and the foregoing *Declaration*:

Mobilize the world scientific community in support of a global framework for agricultural research aimed at:

- alleviating poverty;
- achieving food security; and
- assuring sustainable use of natural resources;

Contribute to the strengthening of national agricultural research systems and the sub-regional and regional fora;

Foster the participation in research collaboration by national agricultural research institutes, regional and subregional research organizations, international agricultural research centers, advanced research institutes, universities, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, farmers, and farmers' organizations;

Encourage the identification of concrete collaborative projects through suitable mechanisms, including subregional and regional fora; and

Convene a Global Forum on Agricultural Research every three years to exchange information in order to identify common challenges, confirm principles of collaboration, and propose alternative means of implementing collaborative programs with the purpose of facilitating partnerships.

We strongly believe that, by committing ourselves to this task and establishing the necessary enabling mechanisms, based on a bottom-up approach and strong national, subregional, and regional fora, the global agricultural research system will be capable of addressing the agricultural research priorities required to meet the challenges and opportunities that humanity is facing today and will face in the foreseeable future.

We propose, in order to implement this *Plan of Action*, to increase efficiency in research management and collaboration through the pooling of resources, and call on the development assistance community, the governments of developing countries, and all stakeholders in agricultural and rural development to increase their support to agricultural research.

We hereby mandate the Global Forum Steering Committee, consulting as necessary, to translate this *Plan of Action* into a detailed program of activities.

