



From: The Secretariat

July 24, 1996

Report of the Tenth Meeting
of the CGIAR Oversight Committee

The CGIAR Oversight Committee held its tenth meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia on May 19, 1996. The Committee reviewed the CGIAR's partnership with NARS, System governance, future role of TAC, System review, Center governance, some due diligence matters, the Committee's future work program, and internal matters. The conclusions reached by the Committee on these matters are summarized in the attached report.

Also attached are summary tables showing the responses to the questionnaire the Oversight Committee fielded earlier this year about its past and future activities.

The Oversight Committee plans to hold its eleventh meeting in Washington, D.C. in October, in conjunction with the 1996 International Centers Week.

Distribution:

CGIAR Members
Center Board Chairs
Center Directors
TAC Chair, Members, and Secretariat
IAEG Chair and Members
NGO Committee Chair and Members
Private Sector Committee Co-Chairs and Members
Genetic Resources Policy Committee Chair and Members

Report of the Tenth Meeting of the CGIAR Oversight Committee

*May 19, 1996
Jakarta, Indonesia*

The CGIAR Oversight Committee (OC) held its tenth meeting at the Jakarta Hilton Hotel on May 19, 1996 in conjunction with the CGIAR's 1996 Mid-Term Meeting. Participating in the meeting were: Paul Egger (Chair), Robert Herdt, John Lewis, and Selçuk Özgediz (Secretary). Johan Holmberg and Cyrus Ndiritu sent their regrets. Manuel Lantin attended as resource person for the discussion of partnership with NARS.

The agenda consisted of the following items:

- 1. Partnership with NARS*
- 2. System governance*
- 3. Future role of TAC*
- 4. System review*
- 5. Center governance*
- 6. Due diligence matters*
- 7. Work program*
- 8. Internal matters*

The OC also interacted with the CGIAR Chair Ismail Serageldin, and with representatives from TAC (Donald Winkelmann, Ralph Riley, and Guido Gryseels), Private Sector Committee (Sam Dryden), Committee of Board Chairs (Wanda Collins and Martha ter Kuile), and the ICLARM board and management (John Dillon and Meryl Williams).

1. Partnership with NARS

The OC reviewed the CGIAR's progress in strengthening its partnership with NARS. It was pleased with the outcome of the Preparatory Meeting for the Global Forum, which preceded the MTM. The meeting showed that the participants shared a common vision of a strong global agricultural research system.

The OC made the following observations on CGIAR's continued effort to strengthen its partnerships with NARS:

- The presence of partners from NGOs and private sector institutions added much to the quality of the consultations in those regional fora where they were present. Future consultations, at all levels, should ensure strong representation from the NGOs and private sector institutions.
- The Preparatory Meeting for the Global Forum showed that there is need for practical priority setting tools that can be used in assessing collaborative

programs.

- We should all learn from positive experiences with partnerships in building new ones. Documenting "best cases" can help in our strengthening efforts.
- NARS are the cornerstones of the global agricultural research system. This system can become stronger and function more efficiently if we all observe the principle of subsidiarity, while enhancing complementarity and fostering creativity.
- TAC has an important leadership role to play in steering the CGIAR when the System is seeking stronger global partnerships in research and a changing role for itself.

2. System Governance

At the request of the OC, the Secretariat prepared a paper on Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures of the CGIAR's Committees and Units and distributed to the CGIAR following its review by the OC. The paper is a reference document for the System and will be updated as new units are formed, or the roles of existing committees or units are modified.

The OC is pleased with the conceptual orientation of the Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group (IAEG) and its pragmatic approach which builds on existing studies. From a governance standpoint IAEG's affiliation with UNDP should support its independence.

The OC suggests that IAEG interact with TAC and the Inter-Center Working Group (ICWG) on Impact Assessment to develop information systems that can allow continuous monitoring of progress in achieving CGIAR goals. IAEG, TAC and ICWG should jointly define their mutual responsibilities in this area.

At the 10th meeting the OC had a brief interaction with Sam Dryden, who represented the Private Sector Committee at the CGIAR meeting. The OC Chair also interacted with Bob Blake, Chairman of the NGO Committee. The OC plans to interact with both committees during the International Centers Week.

3. Future Role of TAC

The OC Chair attended the Stakeholder Consultation initiated by Mr. Serageldin on May 17, 1996. As part of this consultation covered the future role and orientation of TAC, the OC discussed this subject internally. It also interacted with Mr. Serageldin and with Mr. Winkelmann and some of his colleagues from TAC.

The OC strongly welcomes a more strategic TAC. The committee had expressed a similar view at the CGIAR Mid-Term Meeting in 1994 (Interim Recommendations on Organizational Matters, MTM/94/13, May 6, 1994).

The new orientation of TAC would call for greater attention by the Committee to analysis of the CGIAR's role in the global system and its linkages with other components. This expanded responsibility would imply that TAC would advise the Members on whether the CGIAR's positioning in the global system is appropriate, given its overall mission and research conducted by other actors.

The OC also discussed the new financial arrangements, as they were evolving during the MTM, and their implications on the future role of TAC. The OC notes that, over the years, one of the most important functions of TAC has been to define for the CGIAR the "heartland" of the System's activities, and advise on ways of protecting this core. This has involved identifying the set of activities which best further the CGIAR's mission.

The changes envisaged in financing increase the importance for the CGIAR of the definition and constant monitoring of the core (or basic or essential or highest priority) programs of the System. This will establish a yardstick against which center program proposals can be assessed, and ensure that the initiatives of individual centers do not steer the CGIAR away from this core.

One implication of TAC's re-orientation is that the Committee needs to delegate some tasks to make room for the expanded responsibility. As discussed by the Stakeholder Group, this delegation could be in the area of detailed review of center budgets. However, the OC considers that there will continue to be need for TAC involvement in resource allocation in order that recommendations on programs are coherent with those on budgets.

4. System Review

The OC had a preliminary discussion of the next review of the System following interactions it held with several CGIAR constituencies. The message emerging from these interactions is that the constituencies would welcome a review of the System.

The following are among the key reasons for mounting a System review at this time:

- The CGIAR initiated a reform and renewal effort which has led to a number of changes. The renewal effort was completed in 1995 and the changes have been in implementation at least since the beginning of 1996. It is important to examine the impact of these changes on the System, whether they were in the right direction, and what other changes could be made to enhance the vitality and long-run viability of the CGIAR.
- 1996 marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the CGIAR. This is an important milestone for launching a review of the System and examining its accomplishments.
- The *ad hoc* review efforts at the System level in recent years have been primarily in the form of self studies of specific aspects of the System. This has given rise to some criticism.

The OC considers that the review should have a broad scope, covering macro aspects of the CGIAR System--such as its vision and goals; relation to global agendas; partnerships; boundary questions (such as NARS-CGIAR, public-private, etc.); governance, structure and mode of finance; and management of the System, including the roles and responsibilities of existing committees and units.

The review should be conducted by a small team of independent, external individuals of strong credibility and stature. The review should be conducted over a shorter period than the first two reviews of the System. The CGIAR should receive the team's report at the 1997 MTM in Cairo.

The OC also discussed how the review team could be appointed and the process managed. Because the review is of great interest to all segments of the CGIAR, a committee of stakeholders, such as the one assembled by the CGIAR Chair at Jakarta, should appoint the panel and oversee the process.

Within its own work program the OC has assigned high priority to the System Review and is prepared to assist the CGIAR in ensuring its quality.

5. Center Governance

The OC, in cooperation with the CBC and the CGIAR Secretariat, brought before the CGIAR new guidelines on the role, responsibilities and accountability of Center boards. This is for discussion and endorsement by the CGIAR at the MTM. [The guidelines were subsequently endorsed by the CGIAR with minor modifications.]

The guidelines presented at the MTM for CGIAR approval are supplemented with five additional guides on specific topics of center governance. The OC agreed to comment on the drafts, along with the CBC, by August 15, 1996, and have the final versions discussed at its next meeting in Washington. When completed, these documents should be published as reference material for CGIAR center boards and the boards of similar organizations.

The OC and the CBC interacted (at the Chair level) about monitoring the composition of center boards on a periodic basis. The Secretariat has agreed to make available to the OC and CBC updated figures on the North-South and gender balance of the center boards.

6. Due Diligence

The OC reviewed critical developments at the centers. It also discussed the possible expansion of ICLARM activities into Egypt.

Regarding developments at the centers, the OC is concerned about the adjustment process at some centers. The System may need to look carefully at whether some center programs have the minimum critical mass of scientists necessary for a successful operation. It may also need to revisit the question of structural adjustment at the System level.

The ICLARM discussion covered the decision taken by the ICLARM board as well as the preceding decision reached by TAC on this issue. Another reference was the recommendation of the OC in its report of the Ninth Meeting that ICLARM should identify non-competitive funding sources for the operating costs of the Abassa facility before it commits itself to a widely extended work program. The Committee also interacted with the TAC Chair and the ICLARM Board Chair on the rationale of the decisions reached in their respective committees.

The OC examined this question from an oversight perspective, as the arrangement in question is unique (a Center managing a facility owned by a NARS) and the amounts involved are substantial. Two aspects of the issue were judged to be critical: (1) possible distortion of ICLARM's research agenda; and (2) possible distortions in the funding of this center and of the other centers of the CGIAR.

The OC analyzed the difference in positions taken by TAC and ICLARM. It understands ICLARM's interest in seizing the opportunity of an extended facility, expanded scope of its research agenda, as well as the significance of this program for the Middle East political process. At the same time the Committee agrees with TAC's technical judgment. The OC highlighted the risks of funding opportunities driving the research agenda and of the long-term effects of ICLARM's decision.

7. Work Program

The OC reviewed the results of the questionnaire survey of the constituency on the past and future work of the Committee. The quantitative results of the survey are attached to this report.

The OC thanks the membership and the centers for taking time to provide feedback to the Committee. It also appreciates the vote of confidence expressed by the constituency.

The constituency has identified the following activities for priority attention by the Committee (in rank order):

1. Monitoring the evolution of partnerships with NARS
2. Examining the effectiveness of CGIAR's committees and units;
3. Watching brief on System governance
4. Monitoring implementation of Lucerne decisions
5. Examining the CGIAR's priority setting processes
6. Examining the CGIAR's budgeting and finance processes (in cooperation with the Finance Committee)
7. Examining the effectiveness of instruments for the coordination of Systemwide programs
8. Recommending procedures and issues for the 1997 System Review.

Most of the top-ranked activities involve monitoring the evolution of the CGIAR. A second cluster of activities involve examination of processes.

Some activities, such as examination of the coordination of Systemwide programs, are new to the OC agenda and will be addressed by the Committee.

8. Internal Matters

Three members are departing from the Committee--Robert Herdt, Johan Holmberg, and Manuel Lantin. The CGIAR Chair will nominate individuals to take their place. [Subsequent to the OC meeting, Mr. Serageldin nominated and the CGIAR approved the appointments of Andrew Bennett, Fernando Chaparro, and Teresa Fogelberg to the Oversight Committee.]

The Oversight Committee elects its chair from among its membership. The members remaining on the Committee asked Paul Egger to continue chairing the Committee until the new full committee assembles and has an opportunity to address the chairmanship question.