

COMMUNIQUÉ FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF CENTERS - A RECOMMENDATION ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE INTEGRATED PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Context:

Having:

- reflected on the experiences of Center Boards' engagement with the CGIAR Integrated Partnership Board ('IPB') and its members across many meetings and other interactions; and
- benefited from the thoughtful insights and learnings shared by the Chair of the IPB at a meeting of the General Assembly of Centers ('GAC') on 27 October 2025;

and at all times wishing to emphasize and ensure that we build on existing strengths and our commitment to the Integrated Partnership, while also abiding by the principles of "Streamline, Simplify, and Stabilize", the GAC believes that it is in the interests of the CGIAR System to further evolve the configuration of the IPB. The motivation behind the recommended evolution is to reinforce oversight, reduce transactional costs, and improve fiduciary alignment, while retaining overall continuity and balance in terms of its composition.

The GAC recognizes that important next steps are for each Center Board and the IPB to, respectively, undertake their own due diligence regarding fiduciary and legal considerations that arise before any final decisions are taken within the Integrated Partnership, and as required, the System Council.

Recommendation to the Integrated Partnership¹ and the System Council

The GAC recommends the following principles to guide the evolution of the current model:

- **That full representation of Centers** through their Board Chairs be the **majority** of voting members on the IPB.
- That a small number of **independent members** be on the IPB to provide objective voices and complement the overall combination of skills, expertise, and financial and governance experience across the IPB.
- That the **IPB Chair be drawn from among the independent members**, and have the requisite capabilities and time to undertake the role. It is recognized that the Chair role may initially need to be on an ad interim basis.
- That the Executive Managing Director retains an ex officio, non-voting membership of the IPB.
- That the IPB AFRC be reconstituted to include all Center AFRC Chairs, with an **appropriately qualified IPB independent member serving as AFRC Chair**.
- **That for a transitional period, current IPB voting members whose terms extend into 2027 be invited to continue to serve as independent members.** The reconstituted

¹ 'Integrated Partnership' is a defined term in the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization and means ... "a federated group of Centers and the CGIAR System Organization". Article 5.6.f) of the Charter describes the GAC's function to "recommend governance changes to the Integrated Partnership as and when needed".

IPB would have the ability to decide in the future whether to reduce the number of Center Board Chairs and/or independent members and propose a timetable for such changes, provided that the Center Board Chairs remain as the majority of the IPB.

- **That the General Assembly of the Centers be dissolved**, on the basis that participation by Centers in decision-making relating to the Integrated Partnership is now assured by their membership of the IPB² – further streamlining CGIAR’s governance structure.

Proposed next steps

The GAC is committed, in the spirit of transparency and trust, to undertake appropriate outreach and consultation with stakeholders throughout the CGIAR System, to ensure full compliance with applicable legal and good governance frameworks, thereby assisting all relevant decision making bodies (Center Boards, the IPB and ultimately the System Council on the recommendation of its Nominations Committee) to take informed, transparent decisions, with a view to taking key initial decisions including during the System Council’s 10-11 December meeting to implement the recommendations, optimally, by 1 January 2026.

The GAC asks that the technical team of the Governance Working Group work closely with the Nominations Committee of the System Council to develop detailed recommendations and a proposed implementation pathway to inform such decisions.

The GAC acknowledges that beyond the more time-sensitive decisions required, the continued evolution of CGIAR’s governance requires effective oversight of structural, systemic and cultural aspects, and that the longer-term implementation pathway should incorporate review moments in 2026 and beyond by the reconstituted IPB and System Council.

On behalf of the General Assembly of Centers
Roel Merckx, Chair, IITA Board of Trustees and lead GAC Co-Chair

² While the present GAC includes both Center Board Chairs and DGs, the DGs will continue to interact as a Global Leadership Team. The IPB could invite DGs to special sessions, if needed.