

## Third CGIAR Executive Council Meeting—September 24, 2002

### ISNAR EPMR

#### *Discussion:*

- The institutional strengthening function is important for the CGIAR and all centers have activities in this area. The key question is whether client countries are getting the services they need. In restructuring ISNAR one should identify the functions that (a) can be transferred to other centers; (b) can be eliminated; and (c) should be carried out by a modest CGIAR focal service.
- If the institutional strengthening needs are greatest in Africa, the CGIAR's main focus should be on SSA. Relocating ISNAR to an African location should be considered. It is increasingly difficult for the CGIAR to justify having its centers headquartered in developed countries.
- Institutional development can best be addressed at the regional level. Any restructuring of CGIAR activities should consider strong links with regional institutions with capacity in this area.
- Research on institutional innovation and development, including mutual learning, needs to go beyond the national and regional levels to allow international and interregional analyses.
- CGIAR members should not act in isolation *vis-à-vis* ISNAR. A common CGIAR action plan should be formulated. In this regard, funding decisions should be consistent with agreed actions by members.
- It was suggested that GFAR could play a role in the restructuring of ISNAR.
- The CDC also suggested it be represented on the proposed change team.

#### *ExCo Conclusions on the ISNAR EPMR and Recommendations to the CGIAR:*

- *ExCo agrees with the Panel and iSC that “business as usual” is not acceptable.*
- *The ISNAR Board should slow down the DG recruitment process until there is greater clarity on ISNAR's future.*
- *CGIAR members should avoid major changes in ISNAR's funding until the institutional options are clarified. A major increase in funding for 2003 (as indicated in the 2003 financing plan to be up to 40 percent over the 2001 level) is not tenable at this time.*
- *Regarding the two options proposed by the ExCo/PC and FC on the direction of CGIAR follow-up action on ISNAR (i.e., (a) restructuring ISNAR as suggested by ExCo/PC, and (b) phasing ISNAR out over a three to five-year period as suggested by ExCo/FC), ExCo concluded that alternative institutional arrangements should be sought to have the priority functions of ISNAR carried out in a more decentralized, networking mode. A plan for restructuring ISNAR should be developed, looking at all innovative options, including operating as a virtual network, or transferring ISNAR's functions and programs to other institutions.*
- *The CGIAR should appoint a small restructuring team made up of key stakeholders of ISNAR (e.g., donors, clients, the Board) to recommend a restructuring plan over a short period.*