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CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Interim SCIENCE COUNCIL

iSC Comments on the Centre

2003-2005 Medium Term Plans and 2003 Financing Plans

Interim SCIENCE COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

INTERIM SCIENCE COUNCIL

Emil Q. Javier, Chair

4 October 2002

Dear Ian,

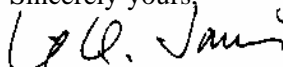
It is my pleasure to transmit to you for the Group's consideration, the interim Science Council's comments on the Centre 2003-2005 Medium Term Plans and 2003 financing plans which this year were submitted in a single stage process. The iSC's observations have been facilitated by programmatic narratives from the Centres highlighting changes since the MTPs were presented to the Group in 2001. The financial analysis by the CGIAR Secretariat was helpful.

The iSC focussed its attention on the Research Agenda and programmatic implications of the financing plans. The outcome of the iSC's analysis provides an overview of the nature of the Research Agenda and System level resource allocation trends.

The iSC certifies that all Centre MTPs are broadly in line with the CGIAR Vision and Strategy endorsed by the Group at ICW 2000. However, the iSC draws to the attention of the Group the urgent need for the future Science Council to: (a) undertake a System level review of CGIAR priorities and strategies so that System priorities across sectors, commodities, themes, logframe outputs and regions can be more precisely defined and articulated and against which the CGIAR Research Agenda can be objectively and systematically monitored and evaluated; and (b) establish a new monitoring and evaluation system that will provide the CGIAR with a regular, complete overview and evaluation of the System's Research Agenda and apparent gaps in the context of the CGIAR's mission and goals.

This year, again, the review process was conducted by the iSC in a virtual mode. I wish to thank the Centres, the iSC Members, and the CGIAR and iSC Secretariats for their timely effort and cooperation in the preparation of this report.

Sincerely yours,



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iSC COMMENTS ON THE CENTRE 2003-2005 MEDIUM TERM PLANS AND 2003 FINANCING PLANS

1. Introduction

The last time the Group approved the Centre MTPs based on a review of CGIAR Priorities and Strategies was in 1997 for the plan period 1998-2000. The project portfolio in each Centre MTP combined for all Centres constituted the CGIAR Research Agenda. Every year until MTM 2001, TAC's assessment of the CGIAR Research Agenda was provided to the Group at its MTM against which the financing plans were adjusted for approval the following ICW. TAC also provided to the Group programmatic implications of any significant funding gaps or resource allocation trends.

At the AGM 2001, this two stage process was terminated and the Group agreed to a single stage process whereby Centres would submit their financing plans together with their revised MTPs in September based on planning guidelines issued to the Centres by the CGIAR Secretariat in June. Centres would have their interactions with investors during the July to August period and the financing plans would be reviewed by ExCo and endorsed by the Group at AGM. The Group decided that only new MTPs or those MTPs which deviated significantly from approved plans should be submitted to the iSC for review. No indication was given whether the Group still required a statement from the iSC on the CGIAR Research Agenda. The iSC was informed that only two or three new MTPs would be submitted for AGM 2002. In the meantime, the formula for allocating World Bank funding to Centres has changed to a so called "bracket formula", with several Centres expected to receive a lower than expected grant in 2003.

Unexpectedly, all Centres submitted their financing plans and MTPs for 2003, along with their intentions for 2005, to the iSC, several of which are new and others contain substantial changes from the approved plans. Financial analyses of the plans were compiled and synthesized by the CGIAR Secretariat and made available to the iSC (CGIAR 2002).¹ The financial syntheses by the CGIAR Secretariat did not include the usual System level analyses of the financing plans against CGIAR-approved allocation levels by Centre, Systemwide Programme, sector, commodity, undertaking, output and region. Only the last two dimensions are reported at the System level.

The iSC assessed in a virtual mode the programmatic implications of the plans of the 16 Centres with a view to reporting to the Group at AGM 2002 on the CGIAR's 2003 Research Agenda, and the programmatic implications of any significant potential financing gaps or deviations. The iSC's focus was on changes from existing plans, particularly those responsive to the Vision and Strategy approved by the Group at ICW 2000. As before, within this broad frame of reference, the iSC's analysis employed the following criteria: scientific priorities and focus of the overall research portfolio or of major projects within it; the research content of the portfolio as reflected by significant restructuring or addition/phasing out of projects; linkages and partnerships with other institutions involved in research and development; and responsiveness to major recommendations of TAC-commissioned external reviews.

¹ CGIAR (2002) Investment Requirements and Financing of the 2003 CGIAR Research Agenda. Third Meeting of the CGIAR Executive Council, 24 September 2002, Washington D.C., CGIAR Secretariat.

This document is divided into four sections. The first is this Introduction. The second section presents a short commentary on each Centre highlighting the programmatic implications, if any, of their respective 2003-2005 MTPs. Section three provides a brief overview of the most significant programmatic developments in the 2003 Research Agenda at Centre and System levels, highlighting implications of the proposed MTPs and financing plans on the overall resource allocations trends. It also highlights inter-Centre efforts in strategic areas that have programmatic and resource implications. The iSC's recommendations to the Group are provided in Section four.

2. Centre Specific Observations

The following are the iSC's specific comments on individual Centres' 2003 financing plans and their 2003-2005 MTPs. Discussion focuses on changes of a programmatic nature considered significant in terms of the iSC's criteria.

2.1 CIAT

CIAT's 2003-2005 MTP is the first one under the Centre's new Strategic Plan 2001-2010, which identifies three major intermediate targets towards achieving sustainable rural livelihoods: (1) competitive agriculture, (2) ecosystems health, and (3) collective rural innovation based on the accumulation of social capital. The major changes reflected in this Plan include a strategic alliance between CIAT and the Tropical Soil Biology Fertility Programme (TSBF), also involving ICRAF, envisioning eventual full integration of soils research of the three organizations in a wider Alliance for Soils in Africa; inclusion of three new projects in the portfolio; and CIAT's involvement in two Challenge Programmes in the pipeline: Biofortification which it is planned to lead together with IFPRI, and Water and Food, in which it is planned to be leading the upper watersheds management theme. CIAT projects an increase in its investment in Sub-Saharan Africa.

CIAT is establishing three new projects, namely Tropical Fruits (IP-6), Confronting Global Climate Change (PE-6) and Information and Communication in Rural Communities (SN-4), which are based on on-going work but are likely to evolve to include new research. In addition, CIAT has rationalized its earlier project portfolio by integrating the project on Sustainable Systems for Smallholders into other projects, by continuing NARS Strengthening Activities (old SN-2) in the Centre's research support units, by administering all genetic resources activities (old SB-1) in one project (SB-2), by merging Beans in Africa (IP-2) with Bean Improvement in the Tropics (IP-1) and by terminating the Ecoregional Programme for Tropical Latin America, from which essential elements are continued in Communities and Watersheds (PE-3) and Land Use (PE-4). CIAT continues to convene two Systemwide programmes, Soil, Water, and Nutrient Management and Participatory Research & Gender Analysis. However, the iSC notes that funding for the latter will drop from US\$ 1.9 million to US\$ 0.8 million due to termination of two major grants. The projected overall funding level, however, does not reflect that change, which may indicate a shift of attention to new initiatives.

The evolution in CIAT's project portfolio is more structural than programmatic. The research agenda continues to be in line with the CGIAR's strategy and reflects both regional prioritization and focus on issues of global significance. The iSC is pleased to note that CIAT

is strengthening its efforts on genetic resources and that the Centre is maintaining its commitment to its global and regional commodity research responsibilities with beans research projected slightly above the 2001 allocation level. The iSC supports the rationalization in CIAT's project structure and also the new projects in which CIAT's focus is and should continue to be in areas where it has capacity and competitive advantage. The iSC believes that CIAT's research contribution to tropical fruits production has potential for improving the productivity of high value activities for smallholders. The new climate change project builds partly on CIAT's traditional strength on biodiversity conservation, breeding for stress resistance and production systems research, and partly integrates previous research efforts on, e.g., modelling, land use and livestock systems. The iSC is very supportive of the new institutional arrangement, the TSBF Institute of CIAT, which will increase the effectiveness of soils research, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. The iSC also commends CIAT for its major involvement in two pioneer CPs likely to be launched.

2.2 CIFOR

While there appears to be no major departure from the Agreed Research Agenda for 2002-2004, and the current plan rolls forward previous plans, there is expected to be some evolution in the content of projects as CIFOR continues the process of strategic reflection and re-evaluation of its medium-term strategy. The new Director General is currently leading a process of change that increases CIFOR's emphasis on improving outreach and impact, whilst moving towards an adjustment of organisational structure in 2003.

CIFOR's eight MTP projects, consolidated from 18 in the previous year, will be managed within three new programs in 2003. It is not clear from the present MTP how the projects have been shifted and combined into the management framework planned for 2003. A "road map" of those changes would be useful to the reader trying to follow the process. Most projects, however, are summarized in the MTP in great detail, complete with log-frame indicators and assumptions. This is useful for project understanding. CIFOR is to be congratulated on the detail of their review process.

Although the actual project portfolio remains largely unchanged for the next three years, there will be continued shifts in emphasis toward a livelihood/poverty-oriented agenda. Ecosystem services of forests and mixed forestry systems which support large numbers of poor people will continue to receive more emphasis. This is especially planned for CIFOR input into Challenge Programmes (CP) should they come on line. Presently, it is a major partner in developing the Tropical Rainforest CP and a minor partner in several others. The iSC commends the Centre for these shifts, which bring the programme more fully into line with the CGIAR strategy and goals.

CIFOR is continuing with its global convention strategy, building a broad range of partnerships in the process. Recognizing it is a relatively small international institution, CIFOR believes it can most effectively use its resources and achieve impact through influencing important institutions and processes. It will do this by focusing its efforts on providing high quality science-based information and expertise to important international processes, i.e., working with UNFCCC, UNFF, IUCN, FAO, GEF, World Bank, etc. The short term flexibility to focus on an opportunity to better understand the fires so devastating to Indonesia and to quantify their root causes is commendable. This brings immediacy to CIFOR's relevance.

2.3 *CIMMYT*

CIMMYT's MTP anticipates no changes in programmatic thrusts or directions and a steady budget for the period 2003-2005, some 12% lower than the 2002 estimate due to decrease in the World Bank funding, necessitating a re-examination of some of the research priorities. The research agenda remains structured around 21 projects – 9 global, 6 regional and 6 frontier -- in the context of sustainable livelihood strategies for poor rural households. A significant proportion of all maize and wheat breeding will continue to be designed to protect current yield levels by identifying new sources of stress resistance or tolerance, as well as capacity to use water, nutrients, and other inputs more efficiently. Complementary to the breeding effort, crop and natural resource management research will continue to be directed at developing practices that protect yields in other ways, e.g. by improving soil fertility, conserving water, reducing the use of agricultural chemicals, or diversifying production systems' capacity to cope with biotic and abiotic stresses. The iSC endorses these strategic research directions.

Special research focus remains on resource-conserving technology for small-scale farmers; genetic diversity for crop improvement, particularly broadening the genetic basis for tolerance to abiotic and biotic stresses (e.g., drought, rust, insect pests, storage pests, *Striga*); stronger post-harvest and seed supply systems, and studies of social and biological dimensions of gene flows. Changes in the external environment have led CIMMYT's social scientists to give increased attention to the following four new areas of research which the iSC endorses: managing IPR in public breeding programmes; how globalization affect local agricultural decisions; restoring productive capacity in Central Asian agriculture; and productivity-enhancing, resource-conserving technologies. The iSC commends CIMMYT for the increasing spread of its reduced tillage and other resource-conserving technologies in the Indus-Gangetic basin, for its greater focus on sub-Saharan Africa, and also for its part in the development of Challenge Programmes on genomics and biofortification.

2.4 *CIP*

At the time of its previous MTP (for 2002-2004), CIP had gone through a major change of restructuring its project portfolio into 10 constraint projects and 3 partnership projects. The 2003-2005 MTP does not show any major programmatic departures from the previous but it reflects the recent funding reductions. It also reflects the results of the 5th External Programme and Management Review completed in March 2002. In this MTP CIP gives attention to the potential role of the Challenge Programmes and to the emphasis on poverty reduction in the CGIAR's Vision and Strategy. The Centre will increase the emphasis on the Global Initiative on Late Blight, the Strategic Initiative on Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture, the Consortium for the Sustainable Development of the Andes and the Global Mountain Program, the first three of which are global or regional partnership projects in the research portfolio and the last is a Systemwide initiative.

The EPMR drew particular attention to the need for CIP to develop a new vision and strategy and set clear priorities in the funding environment which has forced the Centre to cut activities and reduce staff. The iSC is pleased to note that CIP is engaging in a visioning and strategy development which is expected to result in significant changes in the next MTP. However, the iSC joined the EPMR Panel in its concern that CIP's major mandate in root and tuber crops research, potato and sweet potato specifically, is not receiving adequate attention

from donors and that lack of support is preventing the Centre from strengthening its activities as planned. The iSC notices that CIP sees new opportunities to fund this vital part of its agenda through several of the potential CPs and the Global Conservation Trust initiative. Nevertheless, the iSC considers it very important that CIP protects the long term productivity of its mandate research in potato and sweet potato by carefully deciding on future strategic choices for its core activities. The iSC endorses the envisioned research activities for 2003-2005, which include several priorities for CIP's commodity research, and the general projection of gradually increasing funding for potato and sweet potato in the current project pipeline. The iSC supports CIP's decision to relocate the utilization component of the True Potato Seed project to other projects, in response to suggestions in the EPMR report, and assumes that through this development efforts will be rationalised and useful technologies transferred to end users.

2.5 ICARDA

ICARDA's MTP 2003-2005 reflects no major programmatic changes in the project portfolio compared with the MTP 2002-2004. It is noted that in 2002 the Centre received substantial funding from USAID to support emergency seed relief and multiplication to rebuild agriculture in Afghanistan. The bulk of these funds attributed to project 5.1 on strengthening national seed system initiative will continue to have significant effect on the distribution of funding in 2003. The Organisation expects that beyond 2003 the seed activities will diminish with greater attention directed towards research agenda. The year 2003 will focus more closely on the determinants of poverty. Although there are no new MTP projects, there are shifts in emphasis or scale on expansion in research on water management, mitigation and adaptation to the anticipated effects of climate change; and support for socioeconomic research in natural resource management.

The major thrust in germplasm collection enhancement in the mandate crops continues to be towards improving water use efficiency by exploiting germplasm selection and pre-breeding for drought tolerance. A new programme with the Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR) to identify drought resistance genes using micro arrays will start in 2003. Increased attention will be given to functional genomics in legumes. In collaboration with the Association for Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA) and the Central Asia and Caucasus (CAC) NARS Forum, a priority setting process for the CWANA region has been undertaken within the overall CGIAR regional priority setting exercise. ICARDA does not foresee any constraints on project activity due to financial reasons. However, restricted funding now accounts for about two thirds of the budget, which could affect the timely attainment of milestones.

ICARDA continues to implement recommendations of the 4th EPMR and in 2001 reviewed its outreach activities in Latin America. It has reduced activities in Latin America, where it closed the regional office in 2002 and relocated the coordinator. ICARDA and ICRISAT are co-proponent of the Challenge Programme on Desertification, and ICARDA is the convenor of the pre-proposal for a Challenge Program on Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The Centre is also a partner in other CP pre-proposals. These CP involvements are commended.

2.6 ICLARM

ICLARM's 2003-2005 MTP is an update of the earlier Plan and it presents a continuation of a strong programme, with only a few changes at the margins. The iSC appreciates the detail in the document and the thorough process which was used to arrive at the suggested changes. The Centre is increasing its emphasis on researching the adverse impacts of alien species and freshwater fisheries by making both of these themes into new projects: Mitigation of Adverse Impacts of Alien Species on Aquatic Ecosystems and Biological Diversity, and Freshwater Fisheries in an Integrated Land and Water Management Context. Previously these research areas were part of other projects. ICLARM has also redefined five projects in its portfolio raising the total number of projects to 13 from the previous 10. The iSC commends ICLARM for its involvement as a partner in the pilot Challenge Programme on Water and Food, which will be presented to the Group for endorsement, and for providing leadership to the formulation of the Challenge Programme pre-proposal on Increasing Productivity in the Coastal Zone. The Centre's financial projections seem reasonable and are in line with existing resource commitments.

2.7 ICRAF

The investment projected for 2003 is the same as for 2002 which is 15% higher than the actual for 2001. The new management has put a strong emphasis on the most relevant aspects concerning sustainable land use by agroforestry systems. The MTP continues to be structured along 5 core programmes and two Systemwide Programmes. ICRAF hosts the CGIAR Gender and Diversity Programme. In 2003, ICRAF proposes to establish a new South Asia programme subject to availability of funding, the Agroforestry Knowledge Initiative, and the Farmers of the Future programme. ICRAF will continue to develop and adapt the Landcare model for community-based NRM in sub-Saharan Africa, the inter-Centre multidisciplinary programme to address issues of productivity and environmental conservation in the Amazon, a joint CIFOR-ICRAF research programme on the functional role of trees and biological biodiversity in farming systems. The iSC is pleased to note the strategic alliance with TSBF Institute of CIAT focusing on integrated soil fertility management research in Africa, Latin America and Asia to better address the complex soil fertility management and livelihood issues confronting farmers in the tropics and sub-tropics

The iSC commends ICRAF for its involvement in the development of Challenge Programmes dealing with climate change, rainforests, sub-Saharan Africa, agrobiodiversity and water, as well as in facilitating, in consultation with subregional organizations, the integration of activities of CGIAR System for Eastern and Southern Africa subregion.

2.8 ICRISAT

ICRISAT has developed its 2003-2005 MTP following a series of consultations and priority-setting undertaken with stakeholders, and in line with the Centre's new vision and strategy. The MTP consolidates the research portfolio from 10 global projects to 6 global themes. An Impact Assessment Office has been established to strengthen multi-disciplinary thrust in research planning and priority-setting. The global themes promote regional projects focusing on Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. The transition from projects to themes has facilitated the re-organization of biotechnology research from a technology-driven framework to a needs-driven agenda. Consequently regional biotechnology teams will be led by plant breeders, pathologists, entomologists and agronomists. Similarly, a thematic approach to crop

improvement is emphasized to ensure that production to post-harvest issues and sustainable utilization of biodiversity are addressed. The regional emphasis in varietal development takes into account the participation of both public and private sector partners in the South.

The MTP recognizes the growing and dual importance of soil fertility and water constraints in SAT agriculture, setting the long-term provision of environmental goods and services within an Integrated Natural Resources Management Framework. A sustainable seed supply system for productivity enhancement will receive renewed emphasis, including the related aspect of conservation and strategic use of biodiversity. ICRISAT will continue to work actively with ILRI and ICRAF to augment crop and livestock productivity by improving the feed of ruminants and poultry. In order to maximize the benefits of future investments in research and ensure impact, the Centre will emphasize the gathering of market information and research into farmer decision-making. Assessments will also focus on the dynamics and determinants of poverty and development pathways, adoption, and constraints to technology utilization in the semi-arid tropics.

The iSC notes that these changes initiated in 2002 will be continued in 2003, improving the linkages across the research agenda. For the milestones to achieve greater focus and increased impact in the medium-term, they should be matched with available resources. Effective partnership seems to be in place for using biotechnology to serve the poor, and will be strengthened in Asia through the establishment of an Incubator Science Park with some developments foreseen for Africa. The Centre has reviewed its staff requirements entailing recruitment of seven specialists and appropriate re-deployment across locations. Although the total un-restricted grant funding is decreasing, a concern expressed in past commentaries, the budget for 2003 is slightly higher than 2002. This MTP deserves CGIAR's support, since it is adapting to the System's new vision and mission in terms of regional priorities, increased integration and impact focus. The fifth EPMP of ICRISAT is slated for 2003, and the changes instituted will serve as useful areas of interaction in the future.

2.9 IFPRI

The mission of IFPRI of conducting food policy research and outreach activities to meet the food security and nutrition needs of the developing world's poor in a sustainable manner remains unchanged, as described in its 2002-2004 MTP. However, following the appointment of a new DG in 2002 and Board of Trustees instructions, a revised Strategic Plan is expected to be launched in March 2003. Consequently, the 2003-2005 MTP highlights new projects and modifications that conform to the Centre's mandate. Five new projects are foreseen, viz. Institutions for Market Development (GPP 23), Diet Quality and Change (GPP 24); Nutrition Policy Process (GPP 25); Pathways from Poverty (GPP 26); and Strategic Alliances and Networks for Policy Impact (GPP 29).

Project modifications are anticipated in the following programmes: (i) Public Policies for Rural Institutions, Markets and Infrastructure Development (MP1); (ii) Property Rights and Collective Action (MP 11); (iii) Macro-economic Policies, Growth and Poverty Reduction (MP 12); (iv) Policies for Biotechnology and Genetic Resources Management (GRP 1), formerly Agricultural Science and Technology Policy; (v) the Large-scale Interventions to Enhance Human Capital (GRP 28), formerly Targeted Interventions to Reduce Poverty MP 18; and (vi) the Agricultural Strategies for Micro-nutrients project, having become the Biofortified Crops for Human Nutrition (GRP 6), which may become a Challenge Programme. During the MTP period, two projects are being completed: Gender

and Intra-Household Aspects of Food Policy in 2003 and Urban Challenges to Food and Nutrition Security in 2004.

The iSC is pleased to note that MP11 – Property Rights and Collective Action (CAPRi) - will, in 2003, refocus toward equity and disaggregation of impacts across communities to assess the impacts of different policy changes on the poor and marginalized segments, but would have liked to see more specifically-defined themes. The above represents a departure, since CAPRi has concentrated on Alternative Property Rights and environmental sustainability related to rangelands, agroforestry, water and crop-lands. In line with the recently completed review of CAPRi, the iSC looks forward to seeing additional comments on the implementation of the Panel's recommendations in the MTP.

The iSC wonders whether IFPRI's key theme on Market Conditions addresses more directly the issue of links between CGIAR Centres and private sector agri-business in research. Furthermore, the iSC questions under what headings and with which specific research programme does IFPRI explore policy issues for the governments of developing countries, particularly with reference to the relationship between private sector and agri-business.

IFPRI's involvement as co-proponent with CIAT for the Challenge Programme on Biofortified Crops is commended, and its involvement in the CP on Water and Food, both of which are likely to be launched in 2003. If approved, the Centre will need to adjust its plan as none of the CP projects figure in the budget table. The Centre is also involved in six other Regular Process CPs, which represent current activities in the MTP.

2.10 IITA

The new MTP reflects IITA's plan for implementation of its 2001-2010 Strategic Plan, with consolidation of work into six projects. IITA plans to increasingly address the problems of poverty and food security through a food systems approach, both on the production technology side and through policy and institutional capacity building. Emphasis will be given to developing suitable environmental health and poverty indicators against which improvement in rural livelihoods and progress towards CGIAR goals can be measured.

The new MTP responds to the need to strengthen the agroecological approach and to simplify project and management structures within the Centre. Its three agroecological zone projects are delineated both by climate and geography. The three "zonal" projects correspond to the mandate area of the three sub-regional organizations (SROs) that make up FARA. The iSC supports this 'decentralized' and 'demand-driven' approach with its emphasis on predominant cropping systems and selected food systems within the agroecological zones. The three "disciplinary" projects likewise represent logical clusters with germplasm enhancement and preservation, biocontrol, and impact and policy analysis. The elevation of biocontrol/IPM to a major disciplinary project, integrating biodiversity in sustainable systems, is appropriate. The iSC is pleased to see this ongoing and enhanced effort in IPM with IITA as a leader for the Systemwide effort. The combination of policy and impact assessment is also logical. The Centre has also adopted a more streamlined research management structure to strengthen priority setting and strategy development to ensure scientific and programmatic quality across the Institute.

Consistent with the CGIAR's new vision and strategy, the new MTP places stronger emphasis on poverty reduction. The iSC supports the stronger focus on market analysis, policy research, institutional reform and business development as described in the new Plan but cautions the Centre against shifting too many resources away from other critical areas of research. Investment in policy research is targeted to grow by \$1.9 million between 2001 and 2005 (a 59% increase) principally through networks that aim to speed up the adoption of technologies and serve the needs of SROs. (Actual net investments in market and policy research *per se* increase by only \$0.5 m). At the same time, the iSC notes with concern that resources allocated to germplasm improvement and sustainable production will fall by \$2.6 and \$1.2 million, respectively, during the same period.

The major focus of IITA's research continues to be sustainable production and utilization increases in SSA, together with diversification and increased commercialization of farming and agro-industrial enterprises. The Centre expects to strengthen the linkages between agriculture, human nutrition and human health along a number of fronts. The iSC commends the Centre for seeking to strengthen these linkages by, among other things, its involvement in the new Challenge Programmes. The partnerships with sub-regional organizations are applauded, although absent is any explicit mention of FARA as a coordinating organization. IITA indicates in the Plan its intention to readily support any forthcoming CPs in Africa. A slight reduction in senior staff positions will be compensated for in 2003 with post-docs, visiting scientists and associate professionals, which appears to be a cost-effective solution.

2.11 ILRI

ILRI's projected overall level of revenue in 2003 is some 20% less than the recommended level (i.e., 9.3% share of CGIAR funding). The MTP 2003 builds upon the previous MTP and retains the same project portfolio of 8 projects, including the Systemwide Livestock Programme. However, in 2002 ILRI's new management embarked on a review of its strategy and is thus in a phase of transition. Based on the landmark studies on: the *Theileria parva* genome mapping, the mapping of genomes of indigenous cattle breeds, and the poverty and livestock linkages, ILRI has developed a conceptual framework in which research will impact upon poverty by helping the poor to secure assets, improve productivity, and strengthen market access. These three pathways provide a sharper focus for ILRI's research agenda in the context of its mission and ILRI plan to reflect the implications fully in the MTP 2004-2005. For this ILRI has identified five areas of focus for its research agenda. These are: (i) supporting policy making and priority setting for livestock research and development – current and future roles of livestock in reducing poverty; (ii) enabling access to innovation: adaptation and delivery of technology and information; (iii) improving market access – opportunities and threats from globalization and the livestock revolution; (iv) securing assets for the poor – better livelihoods through the application of biotechnologies, and (v) sustaining lands and livelihoods – improved human and environmental health. The iSC endorses the sharpening of focus of ILRI's research agenda.

The iSC commends ILRI for introducing a sharper poverty and impact focus to its strategy and expanding and strengthening its partnerships with regional organizations, the private sector, NGOs and ARIs, and also for its involvement in the development of a number of Challenge Programmes such as on Livestock Diseases, Animal Genetic Resources and sub-Saharan Africa. It also commends ILRI for its work on mapping poverty and livestock in the developing world which could be extended to other commodities.

2.12 IPGRI

IPGRI's 2003-2005 MTP reflects increase in resource investment in the directions in its strategy from 1999, *Diversity for Development*, which defines eight strategic choices for activities. There are no major programmatic changes and the Centre foresees a positive development in its overall funding for the year 2002. In 2003 there will be increased attention to sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, and a modest expansion of work in Central Asia.

Some of the areas of increased attention in 2003 will include incorporating biodiversity into INRM research, developing information and networking for forest genetic resources and work on legal and policy issues. Development of molecular approaches for banana and plantain will continue under the *Musa* Genomics Consortium. An important recent activity has been the campaign for the Global Conservation Trust, which will address the issues of sustainable funding for germplasm collections including those maintained by the CGIAR, and development of a rational global system of genebanks. The iSC emphasises to donors the importance of this task, which will be an important part of the overall funding strategy for implementing the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The iSC commends IPGRI for its role in facilitating the development of the International Treaty.

IPGRI is convenor of the SGRP which is integrated in its project portfolio. The Centre itself is highlighting the financial problems that this Systemwide programme has been facing - a situation that the iSC has continuously noted. The iSC repeats its recommendation to seriously discuss the future functions and funding of this Programme - particularly in the light of the development of the Global Conservation Trust and the Challenge Programme for Unlocking Genetic Resources, in which IPGRI and SGRP are involved. This issue will be examined in the next EPMR of IPGRI which is currently being organized.

2.13 IRRI

For 2003, IRRI proposes an investment 14% lower than the recommended level (i.e., 9.1% share of CGIAR funding) and 13% lower than in 2002 and 22% lower than in 2001. For the MTP period, IRRI will continue its project portfolio that is built on the continuum of strategic to applied research. Research and research-related activities are being implemented through four programmes that address specific problems in the irrigated, rainfed and upland rice ecosystems. IRRI's programmes and projects for 2003-2005 have a primary focus on poverty alleviation, sustaining the natural resource base in the face of growing intensification of rice-based systems from increased population pressure, fast-tracking scientific and technological interventions and innovations to address rice production and farmer livelihood problems in developing countries, facilitating research and development linkages, and reducing transaction costs and overhead expenses in program implementation.

The Institute's ability to support this research portfolio has been severely compromised by the dramatic funding decline that occurred in 2002. However, despite this financial squeeze, IRRI expects to maintain the basic project and institutional priorities, but with scaled-down activities and sustained cost-cutting measures which has involved a 24% reduction in NRS positions in 2002. In terms of regional distribution of effort, IRRI continues to invest mainly in Asia, where the vast bulk of the world's rice is produced and consumed. This is a reasonable strategy for consolidating and strengthening IRRI's presence and

commitment in Asia. The iSC commends IRRI for facilitating the activities of the CGIAR Working Group/Task Force on Genomics, as well as facilitating, in consultation with the regional organization, the integration of activities of CGIAR System for Southeast Asia and the Pacific subregion. The iSC also commends IRRI for its involvement in the development of Challenge Programmes on biofortification, genomics and water.

2.14 ISNAR

The 2003-2005 ISNAR MTP and 2003 financing plan have been developed during a period of major review for the Centre. With the 4th ISNAR EPMR report and the iSC Commentary just completed, a number of key issues have been raised and are now on the table which are likely to affect the future structure and mandate of the Centre. These will be discussed at AGM 2002. Given that ‘business as usual’ is not an option for the Centre and that significant changes can be expected, the iSC offers the following comments about the 2003-2005 MTP fully recognizing that revisions will be made once the major issues have been resolved.

ISNAR’s previous Plan had consolidated 12 MTP projects into six, changing the focus from traditional institutional strengthening to one of helping developing countries put in place policies and mechanisms for cross-sectoral collaboration. The 2003-2005 Plan maintains the six MTP project portfolio but gives increased emphasis to decentralisation of activities. Currently, the few individuals assigned to many of the regions raises serious questions about critical mass and resource use effectiveness.

The six projects will be implemented within the framework of ISNAR’s new Strategic Plan for 2002-2006 which broadens the scope and client base to embrace a range of agricultural research stakeholders in developing countries. The MTP projects will focus on “innovation systems”, seeking to identify new institutional arrangements that promote more effective generation and utilization of new knowledge. While the iSC believes the new Strategic Plan and emerging conceptual framework have considerable merit, and commends the Centre for moving in this direction, it recognizes that a sound strategy for effective implementation of the projects is critical for success. In this respect, the role and operational mandate of ISNAR, vis-à-vis alternative suppliers, must be clarified. This and other issues of ISNAR’s future are elaborated by the iSC in the ISNAR EPMR commentary.

The iSC is pleased to see that ISNAR will be consulting regional and sub-regional organisations and other stakeholders to ensure its work is of high priority and of continuing relevance to its major stakeholders. It also notes that ISNAR intends to increasingly focus on project outputs that can be measured in terms of their impact on food security, poverty alleviation and environmental protection. This addresses an earlier concern of TAC on the need for ISNAR to define clearer linkages between resource allocation, project outputs and CGIAR goals. ISNAR has in the past faced serious financial constraints. The Centre’s projection for 2003 looks much improved (a 40% increase over 2002 estimate) with targeted support increasing significantly. While promising, the iSC has serious concern about the long-term stability of funding and notes the continuing trend towards a shrinking percentage of unrestricted funding, risky for a small Centre such as ISNAR.

2.15 IWMI

Against the background of a number of accomplishments for 2000 and 2001 and with an increasing emphasis on streamlining operations from 2002 onwards, the Centre outlines in its 2003-2005 MTP ways to further enhance its commitment to improving water and land resource management. Building on 2002-2004 MTP and the major strategic planning exercise of 2001, the 2003-2005 Plan continues on the strategic direction it has taken in expanding its scope from water resources to water and land resource, ground water management and water related health and environmental problems. IWMI continues to focus its efforts around seven research themes/MTP projects, using its core unrestricted funds to strengthen these areas.

Benchmark river basins continue to be the focus of IWMI's work, which is primarily in Asia and sub Saharan Africa. The 2003-2005 Plan calls for a long-term presence in a selected number of these sites in partnerships with NARES and ARIs, starting with 2-3 sites initially but expanding to 10 Benchmark Basins at the end of 2005. This appears to be linked to goals and objectives set within the proposed Challenge Programme on Water and Food. The iSC would urge caution in moving too rapidly to set up the 10 Benchmark Basin sites. Focusing on fewer basins but well performing sites will do much in terms of 'proving-the-concept' which in turn would lead to more support and more resources to expand the effort elsewhere with sufficient funding. This calls for a strategy of deliberate scaling, starting with a small number and moving more slowly in others as hypotheses are tested, experience is gained and quality teams are put in place and trained. The iSC is pleased to see increasing collaboration with other CGIAR Centres, particularly with ICRISAT in India. With respect to the Systemwide Initiative on Malaria and Agriculture (SIMA), the iSC, while acknowledging the critical importance of the topic and its potential to contribute vastly to improved health conditions of the rural poor, as currently presented, feels that the programme still needs to define more clearly the strategic options available and the operational steps to be taken to reveal the true biomedical and economic impact of malaria control. Clearer linkages with other malaria control initiatives must also be made.

The iSC endorses the Centre's optimistic vision of the future in terms of growth and its goal of increasing the level of funding over the three-year cycle, from \$18 million to \$22 million (an increase of over 20%). This must be viewed in the context of (a) the high level of interest in water firmly set on the international agenda and IWMI's role in facilitating and supporting various initiatives in this respect; and (b) IWMI's recent growth and expansion since 2000, from less than \$9 million to over \$17.4 million currently, enabling IWMI to more than double its research capacity. The iSC notes the increased emphasis that IWMI will be given to attracting young scientists from the South, through post-doc and PhD programmes, and applauds this initiative.

2.16 WARDA

In its MTP 2003-2005, WARDA responds to the Challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa, namely food insecurity and environmental degradation. While emphasis of the Centre is in West and Central Africa, other sub-regions are integrated in the proposed MTP. The Centre does not anticipate any significant changes, except for the cautious preparations of a stronger involvement in the regions beyond West Africa as expressed in the 4th EPMR. As IRRI has scaled down its activities in East and Southern Africa the call upon WARDA to provide assistance and leadership in rice-based agriculture throughout SSA has increased. In

2002 WARDA launched the African Rice Initiative with the objective to promote the distribution of improved rice varieties and technologies, including NERICA. The MTP takes into account the regions agricultural potentials, builds on WARDA's significant achievements, the special relationship with NARS and its concept of an open centre.

WARDA continues to pursue closer linkages with CORAF/WECARD as the sub-regional organisation takes leadership in the consolidation and integration of research activities of IITA, ICRISAT, WARDA, NARS and other stakeholders in line with its new strategic plan. Based on the progress made over the last several years, the Centre Director's Committee encouraged FARA to take the leadership in the crafting of a Challenge Programme for sub-Saharan Africa. WARDA is actively engaged in the process of developing this CP in collaboration with other CGIAR Centres based in Africa.

Incorporated in 2003 proposed financing plan are several new project proposals that are either approved or at an advanced stage of consideration by donors. Among these are AVRDC Rice-based Vegetable Research and Development; African Rice Initiative; Promotion of NERICAs in Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Sierra Leone, and Farmer Participatory Improvement and Adaptation of Rice Production Technologies in Rainfed System Phase II. The iSC expects WARDA to adjust its scheduled research outputs as stated in the strategic milestones for 2003-2005 in accordance with the progress made. As long as the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire continues to be a concern, the CGIAR ought to monitor the Centre's capacity to implement the MTP as currently proposed.

3. Overview

3.1 *Research Agenda*

The iSC notes that the MTPs of most Centres are broadly consistent with the Group-endorsed Plans. Centres' project portfolios have been maintained except in the case of ICRISAT, IFPRI and IITA. Also, IWMI, CIFOR, ISNAR and ILRI are in the process of making significant changes to their research agenda. The iSC finds that these changes permit the seven Centres to respond more effectively to the directions of the new CGIAR Vision and Strategy.

Specifically, the consolidation of ICRISAT's agenda will permit that Centre to strengthen its impact assessment work and also respond to the particular needs in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, emphasising a thematic and biotechnological approach to crop improvement involving public and private sector partners. In addition, there is renewed emphasis on the importance of soil fertility, water constraint and seed supply system in SAT agriculture. The rationalization and expansion of IFPRI's project portfolio conforms to that Centre's mandate. New activities are foreseen in areas dealing with: institutions for market development, Diet Quality and Change; Nutrition Policy Process; Pathways from Poverty; and Strategic Alliances and Networks for Policy Impact. The restructuring and consolidation of IITA's portfolio is consistent with the need to strengthen the agroecological approach and to simplify project and management structures within the Centre. It emphasizes demand and impact driven activities through a food system approach to ensure responsiveness to changing demand from the rural, urban and expanding commercial sectors, and targeted towards improvements in rural livelihoods.

MTPs of IWMI, CIFOR, ISNAR and ILRI show strategic modification being made to their research agendas in line with the new CGIAR Strategy. IWMI's MTP continues to give positive impetus to an integrated water resources management focus, while permitting integration of the land dimension of water management into the Centre's research agenda. Through Systemwide Programmes, IWMI also is strengthening research on the health impacts of water management and on water productivity. CIFOR's consolidated project portfolio is directed strongly towards a livelihood/poverty-oriented agenda, including a greater emphasis on ecosystems services of forests and mixed forestry systems which support large numbers of poor people. ISNAR's MTP focuses on identifying institutional arrangements that promote more effective generation and use of new knowledge for achieving the goals of poverty alleviation and food security. This will provide a positive impetus to regional and sub-regional organizations in their work to adapt ISNAR's products for national applications. This will be aided by the increased emphases given by the MTP to decentralisation of activities provided critical mass can be sustained in support of such activities. Finally, ILRI's MTP provides information of its emerging revised agenda which is based on a conceptual framework in which pathways out of poverty are identified and linked to the strategic research themes which provide a sharper focus on poverty alleviation and livelihood improvements.

A key achievement by all Centres has been the additional efforts that have gone into establishing closer planning consultations with regional and subregional research organizations (ROs/SROs), NARS, civil society, regional financial and development assistance community. This is providing the impetus to establish effective processes to integrate regional and global priorities into concrete programmes. The iSC commends the remarkable goodwill and effort that has been extended by the ROs/SROs and NARS to the CGIAR Centres in attempting to establish a regional approach to research. Benefits from such regional planning consultations are already visible in several of the proposed Challenge Programmes.

All Centres now present their projects, including Systemwide Programmes, in logframe format, with a detailed listing of goals, objectives, outputs, milestones, verifiable indicators, and assumptions. The fact that the Centres are now using this approach makes the research planning process more transparent and facilitates monitoring of implementations. These factors, in turn, enhance Centres' accountability for the timely delivery of outputs, a necessary condition for achieving impact. Taken together at the System level, the MTPs reflect continuity in the aggregate allocation of resources to the 5 Logframe Outputs comprising the CGIAR's Research Agenda (see Section 3.2 on resource allocation trends). The iSC observes a number of trends in specific activities that are of strategic significance. These are noted briefly further below under each logframe output.

Germplasm Collection, Characterization and Conservation

The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT), adopted end 2001, was a crucially important development for the CGIAR as the major in-trust holder of the international genetic resources in its *ex situ* collections. The Centres will individually sign agreements with the Governing Body of the Treaty. The IT will have implications in the management of genetic resources by the Centres and the related intellectual property. The iSC notes that unfortunately some crops relevant to the CGIAR were omitted from the list of species included in the multilateral system of access and benefit sharing, namely groundnut, soybean, some forage species and wild crop relatives. A development complementary to the IT will be the establishment of the Global Conservation

Trust, for which IPGRI has led a major campaign to mobilize donors' funding commitment. The iSC emphasizes the importance of this long-term financing strategy in bringing sustainability to the maintenance of genebanks within and outside the CGIAR and in increasing the opportunities for evaluating and utilizing the genetic resources more effectively for improving crop productivity.

The iSC considers the Challenge Programme (CP) on unlocking the genetic diversity in crops for the resource poor an important programme with significant potential for economies of scale and synergy among the CGIAR Centres and their research partners. The main benefit in this initiative would come through capitalizing on the genetic value in the germplasm collections, which through the means of molecular science and bioinformatics can be defined more precisely and fully. The iSC hopes that the initiative can be further developed and ultimately launched as a CP. The iSC is pleased to note that the formulation of the CP benefited from the strategic deliberations of the CGIAR Working Group or Task Force on Genomics convened by IRRI. The iSC believes that the Task Force on Genomics is beginning to provide the new impetus needed to more efficiently organize CGIAR's work in the priority areas of genomics research and bioinformatics for crop improvement.

Germplasm Improvement

In the research agenda of the commodity Centres genetic improvement has maintained a steady share of resources. The iSC notes, however, a one percent point drop in the share projections for 2003-2005 compared to the actual 18% share in 2001 of the total CGIAR resources.

The iSC recommended two CPs focusing on germplasm improvement to be considered by ExCo. As discussed above, ExCo decided not to recommend to the Group the CP proposal on genetic resources in its current form. In supporting the further development of this CP proposal, the iSC repeats the message of TAC in its commentary on the 2002-2004 MTPs, in which TAC expressed its support to concerted efforts in functional genomics for advancing the breeding of crops and traits that are important for the poor. Centres are increasingly tapping into the new advances in molecular biology including genomics research. Other areas of emphasis in germplasm improvement include biodiversity and post-harvest research.

The iSC is pleased to see that the CP on biofortification is very likely to be endorsed at AGM. Several Centres will have a chance to participate in this CP which has direct relevance to their core breeding work. The iSC considers this a very important development in strengthening the heartland of the CGIAR and in bringing new visibility to crop improvement and the international public goods it can create.

Sustainable Production Systems through Integrated NRM

Integrated natural resources management (INRM) work in the System has continued to be under intensive scrutiny and assessment through a series of workshops convened by the CDC Sub-committee on NRM also referred to as the CGIAR Task Force on NRM. INRM 2001 (Cali) focused on operationalizing the INRM framework. INRM 2002 (Aleppo) focused on methods and approaches which have proven successful. The iSC has continued to work closely with the INRM Task Force and is collaborating in assembling a set of successful case studies to illustrate the underlying principles and concepts, the lessons learnt in applying these

to actual problem sets, and how information technology, spatial analyses and modelling, and ecosystems approaches are enabling INRM research. Also, MTPs of IWMI, CIFOR, ICRAF and ICLARM as well as of CIAT, IITA, ICARDA, ICRISAT and IFPRI are providing further impetus to the integration in the Research Agenda of land and water dimensions with productivity and community dimensions of resource management which are benefiting from inputs of ecological, watershed and social sciences.

The iSC recommended the CP on Water and Food which it believes will provide a research framework that will bring the research and development community to address urgent major concerns as reflected in the international arena. If the CP does manage to mobilize the required additional funds, then water management research in the CGIAR will finally begin to receive the kind of attention it deserves.

CGIAR's community-based participatory research efforts, as noted in a separate Commentary on CAPRI External Review Report, to define technical and policy options for collective action necessary for improved management of common property natural resources is beginning to show the importance of such research to the CGIAR goals of poverty alleviation and sustainable food security. Similar indications also appear from the results from PRGA. These Systemwide Programmes do point the way forward for CGIAR to divert resources towards social innovation research that need to accompany technological innovation research.

Socioeconomics and Policy

As already indicated, investments in socioeconomics and policy research, whether viewed as *Undertakings* or as *Logframe Outputs*, are well above Group-endorsed targeted levels, and the trend will continue. It is not clear to what extent this represents a significant reallocation of System level resources, primarily away from Germplasm Improvement to socio-economics and policy analyses, versus simply a change in the way Centres are now apportioning activities and outputs. A definitive answer would require a more in-depth assessment, perhaps even down to the project level. It would appear, however, based on the narratives and information provided in the Centre MTPs and financing plans that some degree of reallocation has occurred. No doubt this is partly in response to the new Vision and Strategy of the CGIAR, with its stronger emphasis on poverty and its determinants (esp. ICARDA, ICRISAT) on the one hand, and the need for more attention to market analysis, business development and institutional reform (IITA and ICRISAT) on the other. CIFOR too is now emphasizing the importance of effectively using its resources to achieve impact through influencing important institutions and processes. Perhaps most important of all, there is a substantial increase in projected funding levels for IWMI, IFPRI and ISNAR over the three-year MTP period. All three centres have a dominant or major share of their effort on socioeconomics and policy research. IITA too, is projecting a 59% increase in its allocation to policy research over the period.

Earlier in the year, CIMMYT and the iSC/SPIA organized an international conference on impact assessment (IA) of agricultural research and development in Costa Rica. The conference entitled "Why hasn't IA made more of a difference?" brought together over 145 participants with representation from most CGIAR Centres, many NARS organizations, universities, multilateral lending organizations, development assistance agencies, NGOs, philanthropic foundations and the media. In addition to addressing productivity, equity, environment and health impacts, papers dealt explicitly with hard-to-measure impacts in such

areas as training, networks, participatory research and policy research, offering novel approaches to better evaluate impact. There is clear consensus and widespread interest in seeing the IA agenda move ahead rapidly. A paper highlighting the perceived needs and opportunities in system-wide IA was presented by SPIA in the final session. Three main areas where significant progress can be made in the future include: matching IA outputs to decision makers' priority needs; making IA outputs more credible, plausible and understandable -- without losing rigour; and, improving methods, particularly in terms of developing a set of impact indicators for a broader array of impacts beyond the traditional economic ones. In addition to accountability, the objective of learning lessons needs greater emphasis in conducting IA.

Another particular effort by most of the Centres has been directed towards the CGIAR Social Research Conference organized by CIAT at the behest of the iSC. This Conference focused on the need for greater social and sociocultural research capacity in the CGIAR, given the new impact oriented Vision and Strategy and the increasing demand and need for participatory research for technological, social and institutional innovations and policy formulation. The Conference has highlighted a need to raise the status and capacity of social research in the CGIAR to ensure that research and products are environmentally as well as socially sound based on an effective integration of biophysical and social sciences at all stages of technological research process in the CGIAR. The outcome of the Conference is expected to be reported separately to the AGM, but the iSC considers that any recommendation to increase resources directed towards social research would need to be evaluated in the context of new CGIAR priorities and research opportunities.

Enhancing Institutions

The MTPs at the System level are responding to the institutional environment characterised by an increasingly interdependent world as reflected in the outcome of the FAO World Food Summit-five year later and UN WSSD 2002 - where poverty alleviation, food security and environmental and social sustainability are intimately linked. CGIAR activities in enhancing institutions should improve the capacity of NARS scientific management of ecosystem goods and services; information and communication technology, for rural communities; food systems approach; environmental health and poverty indicators, impact and policy analysis; priority setting and strategy development. The iSC notes that Research Agenda increasingly address important areas such as biotechnology, biosafety, intellectual property management and GIS. Equally, linkages between agriculture, human nutrition and human health are receiving greater emphasis. However, building social capital and policy commitment necessary to shift from traditional institutional strengthening to modern institutional management requires greater attention. The Research Agenda is beginning to aim at institutional enhancement that will assist developing countries to put in place policies and mechanisms for cross-sectional and cross-institutional collaboration for effective social and economic development.

3.2 Resource Allocation Trends

The Group approved a new Vision and Strategy for the CGIAR at ICW 2000 as well as the need to prioritise CGIAR activities and resource allocation in terms of the following five logframe outputs: germplasm collection, characterization and conservation; germplasm improvement; sustainable production systems through integrated NRM; socioeconomics and policy research; and enhancing institutions. However, System level relative priorities between

these have not yet been established and therefore the CGIAR currently has no resource allocation targets by logframe outputs.

The following changes from the Group-approved resource allocations for 1998-2000 period are apparent.

In terms of *Centres*, the 2003 financing shares of the CGIAR Research Agenda proposed by CIFOR, CIP, ICRISAT, ILRI, IRRI and WARDA are notably below Group-approved shares. These Centres face shortfalls of 15% or more, with ICRISAT and ILRI facing a shortfall more than 20%. On the other hand, financing shares of CIAT, CIMMYT, ICARDA, IFPRI, IITA, IPGRI and IWMI are above the Group-approved levels with ICRAF and IITA being above by 13% and 12% respectively, IPGRI by 23% and IWMI by 50%.

In terms of the CGIAR *Undertakings*, the trend of an increasingly higher share of resources allocated to Improving Policies continues. From the Group endorsed 12% target figure, the actual System-level allocation has risen from 14% in 2000 to 16% in 2002 and 2003 and is expected to reach 17% in 2005. Investments in Strengthening NARS remain above their targeted 20% level, at a constant 22% level through 2005. Conversely, there is relatively lower investment for Germplasm Enhancement and Breeding (20% approved for 2000 vs. 18% actual) that has continued to decrease over time (17% in 2003 and 2005). Similarly, Saving Biodiversity has remained and is projected to remain at a steady 10% level through to 2005 vs. 11% approved for 2000. Of more serious concern is the discrepancy between targeted and actual (and projected) levels of investment for Production Systems and Management. The share of total investment in the Undertaking is expected to fall from 17% in 2002 and 2003 to 16% in 2005, while its targeted level is 19%. Protecting the Environment is the only Undertaking that consistently maintains its targeted level at 18%.

Thus, there is a shift in resources to Improving Policies perhaps at the expense of Germplasm Enhancement and Breeding which in 2003 and 2005 is expected to be 11% below approved level. There is also a continuing shortfall in investment in Increasing Productivity and Saving Biodiversity and continuing over investment in Improving Policies and Strengthening NARS. The continuing trend of increased allocation to Policy research well beyond the recommended level at the expense of Germplasm Enhancement and Breeding and Production System Development and Management is a cause for concern.

In terms of *Outputs*, although there are no approved targets set by the CGIAR, the trends are as follows. Resources allocated to: Germplasm Collection, Characterization and Conservation has remained steady at 10% since 2000, continuing at that level up to 2005; Germplasm Improvement is proposed at 17% for the period 2003-2005, down from 18% in 2002; Sustainable Production Systems through INRM is proposed to remain steady at 35% in 2003 but falls to 34% in 2005; Socioeconomics and Policy is proposed at 16% in 2003, up from 14% in 2000, and rising to 17% in 2005; and Enhancing Institutions at 22% steady over the period 2000 to 2005. Thus, allocations to *Outputs* in 2003 show a shift in resources towards Socioeconomics and Policy at the expense of Germplasm Improvement which falls in 2003 and 2005.

As mentioned earlier, the financial analysis and information provided by the CGIAR Secretariat does not allow any comments on resource allocation trends with regards to *Sectors, Commodities and Systemwide Programmes*. However, based on ILRI's and ICLARM's financing plans, 2003 proposed allocations to the livestock and fish *Sectors*

continue to remain below the recommended CGIAR allocation shares of 17% and 5% respectively. Allocation to IWMI is expected to exceed approved level by some 50% over the recommended 3.2% share of CGIAR funding, although it is not clear how much of this increase is directed to the water sector *per se* which is nonetheless expected to receive an increased level of investment previously called for by the Group.

Over the plan period 2003-2005, the allocation shares by *region* remain stable at sub-Saharan Africa 45% (increase from 42% in 2000), Asia 31% (decrease from 32% in 2000), Latin America 14% (decrease from 17% in 2000), and CWANA 10% (increase from 9% in 2000). Thus, Centre research agenda appear to have adjusted to the call for a stronger focus on sub-Saharan Africa but not for Asia which shows a decrease in allocation shares which is matched by a proportionate increase for CWANA. Again, as no investment targets for research in the regions have been formulated, it is not possible to make any comparative comments on inter-regional balance. However, in the future, it would be useful to monitor investments by subregions as well, e.g., Central America, South America, West and Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa; North Africa, Central Asia, West Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, etc.

4. Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

The iSC offers the following concluding remarks and recommendations with regards to the System level process for the evaluation of the CGIAR Research Agenda.

The year 2003 is the third year beyond the 1998-2000 MTP period for which research priorities were formulated by TAC and approved by the Group in 1997. Also, the CGIAR reform process has led to the introduction of a third programmatic arrangement, the Challenge Programmes, in addition to Centre Core Programmes and Systemwide Programmes, for CGIAR research. It is not fully clear to the iSC how the Group wishes to monitor and evaluate the CGIAR Research Agenda in the future. Certainly, new MTPs submitted by Centres to the Science Council on a staggered and *ad hoc* basis will not provide a sound arrangement for a systematic annual evaluation of the CGIAR Research Agenda.

Also, the iSC notes that among the CP proposals there are many that stem from existing Systemwide activities. In a number of cases a Systemwide programme (SWP) mode would seem to be the most optimal one. There is a need to discuss the organization of CGIAR research which is being organized and implemented at three levels: core programmes, SWPs and CPs, all of which should optimally contribute to the overall CGIAR Research Agenda. The iSC sees that in the future the Systemwide Programmes should continue to be considered as a valid and effective way of organizing collaborative research among Centres and with NARS and other partners. Lessons are being drawn from the experiences with the SWPs, most of which have been externally evaluated by TAC/iSC. Donor interest at initiation and subsequently is crucial for an effective start and viability. For improving the visibility and attractiveness of the SWPs, the performance monitoring should be made more systematic. The implications of large funding fluctuations or terminations for continuing the research and to the partnerships involved deserve an analysis.

Given the drastically changed programmatic situation in the CGIAR, and the emerging resource allocation deviations described in Section 3, the iSC recommends that:

The Group should request the future Science Council to undertake, in consultation with CDC/CBC, a review of CGIAR priorities and strategies so that System priorities across sectors, commodities, themes, logframe outputs and regions can be more precisely defined and articulated and against which the CGIAR Research Agenda can be objectively and systematically monitored and evaluated.

Based on the AGM 2001 interpretation of the new responsibilities, the Science Council is expected to undertake periodic science evaluations of individual Centre project portfolio, including Systemwide Programmes, when Centres produce fresh MTPs every 3 years, and of the total project portfolio of the CGIAR System, referred to as the CGIAR Research Agenda. Also, the SC is expected to undertake *ex-ante* evaluation of Challenge Programmes, and monitor and evaluate their performance during implementation in terms of science relevance and quality. The focus on outputs and impact also requires that emphasis is placed in the SC to carry out impact assessment studies in a systematic fashion. Thus, a meaningful strategic evaluation of the CGIAR Research Agenda inclusive of the Systemwide and Challenge Programme and the resources directed towards CGIAR goals and outputs is not simple or straightforward. A new systematic effort must be put in place, given the multi-layered nature of CGIAR's output and impact oriented Research Agenda.

The iSC has elaborated its views regarding this matter in a document prepared for the Working Group on Science Council². The iSC considers that the MTPs of the Centre core programmes, Systemwide Programmes and Challenge Programme constitute the basic documents against which Centre and System performance can be objectively and systematically analysed and evaluated, once System priorities across sectors, commodities, themes, logframe outputs and regions have been more precisely defined and articulated as recommended above. Consequently, the iSC recommends that:

A systematic evaluation and monitoring process should be set up by the future Science Council, in consultation with CDC/CBC, to provide the CGIAR with a regular, complete overview of the System's Research Agenda and apparent gaps, and an evaluation of the overall agenda in the context of the CGIAR's mission and goals.

² The document accompanies the iSC Chair's report to the AGM 2002 and is entitled "Guarding and Enhancing the Relevance and Quality of Science in the CGIAR: An Operational Framework for the Science Council (SDR/iSC:IAR/02/07 Rev. 2)