

10/21/00

## **International Centers Week (ICW2000) Opening Session, Monday, October 23**

### **Chairman's Announcements**

Ladies and Gentlemen.

#### **Introduction:**

I now move on to the Chairman's Announcements. At this time, we welcome old and new friends, bid farewell to those who are moving on, record achievements and, inevitably, sometimes share the burden of sorrow as well.

#### **Condolences:**

Robert Kerr Cunningham passed away on June 22, at age 77. He was a great supporter of the CG, a believer in its mission, with many friends in this System. He served on the boards of IITA, IRRI, ISNAR, and WARDA. He was widely respected throughout the broader international agricultural development community.

Bichapu Gandamma, Peta Pentamma, Lalitha Ramdas, Mukkera Salamma, and Gulli Suguna, lost their lives when flash floods swept through ICRISAT's Pantancheru campus on August 23. All five women were temporary farm workers at the center.

We lost David Bell on September 6. He was 81. We mourn his loss, but we celebrate the abundance of his life as well. He was a dedicated pioneer and leader, whose contribution to creating and nurturing the CG can never be forgotten. He was active from both USAID and the Ford Foundation. Many of the practices now in place to nurture high quality science at the centers flowed from his inspiration. His intellectual vigor, his organizing drive, and his profound sense of caring for the less fortunate are beacons to all of us.

I ask that our condolences to the families of all those whom we remember today, be recorded in the ICW2000 Summary of Proceedings.

\* \* \* \*

As I continue with the rest of my announcements, I suggest that we hold our applause until the end.

### **Delegations and Visitors:**

Jacques Ekebil is here for the first time as the FAO cosponsor representative. A former IITA scientist, with strong roots in this community, he is well known to most of you. We are happy to have him back.

I welcome all heads of delegation who are here for the first time.

I would also recognize a number of distinguished visitors:

- Issam Elzain, Minister of Planning, Syria
- Eung Long Jee, Administrator, Rural Development Administration, Korea
- Carlos Luna Conroy, Vice Minister of Agriculture, Peru
- D. S. Pradhan, Minister of State for Agriculture, India;
- Dora Rapold, Director, Technical Department, SDC, Switzerland;
- Abdulatif Al-Mugrin, Director of Agriculture and Trade, Office of the Secretary General, Gulf Cooperation Council;
- Kenneth Quinn, Executive Director, World Food Prize Foundation.

### **Honor Roll:**

Ambassador Quinn's presence is a happy reminder that the Millennium World Food Prize was recently awarded to Evangelina Villegas and S. K. Vasal, both of CIMMYT, for developing and producing quality protein maize. Evangelina is the first woman to receive the World Food Prize. Their work represents people-centered science at its best, providing better nutrition while fostering economic growth among the world's poor. We honor them for their initiative, their dedication, and their success in overcoming long scientific odds. Six other World Food Prize laureates have been associated with the CGIAR. I'm sure that other CGIAR scientists will maintain the tradition.

Moving on to the award of another honor, I am pleased to announce that Nigeria's Order of the Officer of the Federal Republic has been conferred on Francis Idachaba, Principal Research Scientist, ISNAR, in the Millennium National Honors List issued by the President of Nigeria.

### **CGIAR Director:**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Francisco Reifshneider, the Director-Designate of the CG. The Bank's formalities connected with Francisco's appointment are in their final stage, and I expect a separate statement from the Bank very soon, perhaps tomorrow.

Francisco was selected after an intensive and transparent search, led by the cosponsors. I thank everybody who participated in this process. I particularly thank the candidates, all of them of the highest caliber, for their interest in this position and in the mission of the CGIAR.

Francisco is at EMBRAPA, where he heads the Secretariat for International Co-operation. He has had extensive national and international experience, collaborating with FAO and the World Bank, and with several national institutes outside Brazil. His distinguished career includes appointments as adjunct professor at Cornell and the University of Brasilia. His contributions to the development of agriculture earned him Brazil's highest award, the Frederico de M. Veiga Prize.

He has represented Brazil at the CGIAR, frequently as head of delegation, serves on the Consultative Council, and is Vice Chairman of CIFOR's board of trustees. He was directly engaged in planning and helping to manage the Mid-Term Meeting held in Brazil. His knowledge of the CGIAR has therefore been gained from many perspectives. I know you join me in extending your co-operation and good wishes to him as he prepares to take on the challenges of his new position.

### **Farewells:**

As we welcome Francisco, we say farewell to Alexander von der Osten who will be retiring next month. You have known Alexander much longer than I have. He has been with the CGIAR in many capacities – as Executive Secretary of TAC, as Director General of ISNAR, and as Executive Secretary of the CG, a position he has held for 11 years. In the brief period that I have known him I have been impressed by his integrity, his commitment to all that this System stands for, and his helpfulness. All of us wish you and your family well, Alexander, on whatever path you take in the future.

We say farewell, too, to Roberto Lenton who was the Director General of IIMI, before he began his term as the UNDP cosponsor representative. IIMI, I should add, became IWMI in August, when the name change was formally approved by the Parliament of Sri Lanka. Roberto was at the helm of IIMI in very trying times. He laid the foundation for a strong institute. He has been active and effective, as UNDP's cosponsor representative. From early next year, Roberto will be the Executive Director for international programs at Columbia University's International Research Institute for Climate Prediction. Good luck, Roberto.

For three board chairs, this is their last ICW in that capacity: Wally Falcon (CIMMYT), Rudy Rabbinge (IRRI), and Ragnild Sohlberg (ICRISAT). Their influence has been strong within the centers they led, but far beyond that as well. I thank them for giving of their time, and sharing their wisdom with us. I am sure we will see more of them in the future.

We recognized Frank Rijsberman as DG-designate of IWMI at Dresden. He has since assumed duties.

Per Pinstруп-Andersen is due to end his term as CDC Chair. He has been an active chairman at a critical time. I thank him for all that he has done, and for his help as I began my chairmanship. He will be succeeded by Hank Fitzhugh

We are losing Roger Rowe, who retires in January from his position as Deputy Director General of ICLARM. He thus completes a distinguished career as research scientist and corporate manager within the CGIAR System, having served five centers since 1973, all at senior level and often under difficult circumstances.

Finally, we say farewell to two TAC members Magdy Madkour and Cyrus Ndiritu, whose terms have ended. I thank them for their important contribution to the work done by TAC.

Let us now have a round of applause to honor all I have mentioned.

**Exhibit:**

I have one more announcement. The CGIAR-Future Harvest exhibit in the atrium of this building will be formally opened at the beginning of today's lunch break.

\* \* \* \*

**Adoption of Agenda:**

Our next item of business is to adopt the ICW2000 agenda. Can we go ahead and adopt the draft agenda that has been with you for some time.?