

International Centre's Week 2000

Washington, DC

TAC CHAIR'S REPORT

1. This TAC Chair's report brings the Group up-to-date on the Committee's activities since MTM'00, highlighting progress or accomplishments in the principal areas of TAC's responsibility: (a) assuring the quality and relevance of Centre science; (b) developing priorities and strategies, (c) recommending resource allocations and monitoring programme implementation; (d) reviewing strategic considerations within the external environment, and (e) ensuring assessment of the CGIAR System's impact.

(a) Assuring the quality and relevance of Centre science.

2. One of the principal means by which TAC carries out its responsibility to assure the quality and relevance of Centre science is by conducting external reviews to evaluate Centre and Systemwide programmes. Since MTM'00, two such reviews were completed and progress was made in implementing two others.

3. The Group has had the opportunity to consider at this meeting the report of the Systemwide Review of Plant Breeding Methodologies chaired by Dr. Don Duvick (USA) and TAC's Commentary on the report. This review was conducted in response to a recommendation of the Third System Review and builds upon earlier TAC commissioned studies in the areas of biotechnology and proprietary science. The Group has also had opportunity to consider at the present meeting the report of the Fifth External Programme and Management Review of CIAT chaired by Dr. Ronnie Coffman (USA), and TAC's Commentary.

4. The Fifth EPMP of IITA, which is being chaired by Dr. Ken Cassman (USA), is underway with a panel of six experts. It will be completed in 2001 and the review report considered by the Group at ICW'01. Planning and organization of the Fifth EPMP of CIP, which will be chaired by Dr. Ed Schuh (USA), is advancing; the panel profile is being developed in consultation with the Centre. The review will be implemented in 2001- 2002 and the panel's report considered by the Group at ICW'02. In view of TAC's responsibilities with respect to the CGIAR Vision and Strategy exercise, the Committee has deferred the scheduling of the Fourth EPMP of ISNAR and the Fifth EPMP of ICRISAT until mid-2002. The Centres have been informed accordingly.

5. By way of follow-up to a recommendation of the Third System Review, TAC, supported by its Standing Committee on External Reviews, is organizing an overall review of the evaluation process within the CGIAR. In consultation with CBC/CDC, the CGIAR Secretariat and other stakeholders, a small working group meeting is planned for January 2001, with a view to reporting to MTM'01.

6. Building on the external reviews of the Systemwide Genetic Resources Programme and of the Ecoregional Programmes, TAC plans to carry out in 2001 selective reviews of three other Systemwide programmes, including those of a thematic nature. The Committee is in the process of consulting the Centres involved. At least one of these reviews will include an impact assessment component.

7. Finally, as part of its effort to encourage scientific innovation, TAC at its 79th Meeting considered seven submissions for the King Baudouin Award in the light of criteria previously established by the Committee. TAC took decision and prepared a commentary on the winning submission. It also worked closely with the CBC Chair in advising on the selection for the Chairman's Science Awards. These awards will be announced at ICW'00.

(b) Developing priorities and strategies

8. Since my last report, TAC has continued to work, in concert with other stakeholders, on the CGIAR's 2010 Vision and Strategy. At MTM'00, the Group endorsed a new vision, mission, and goals for the CGIAR and requested the Committee to finalize its recommendations on the System's strategy taking into account comments received from the Members. It also requested TAC to elaborate the implications of the seven strategic planks for structure and governance. The Committee undertook this work at the Special TAC Meeting held at ISNAR, The Hague, 23-25 August. It also commissioned a second electronic conference on structure and governance facilitated by RIMSP. The Committee completed its work at its 79th Meeting held at IITA, Ibadan, 25-29 September. TAC's paper on structure and governance presented the Committee's views and also commented on the submissions from the CBC/CDC, EIARD, and other stakeholders. The TAC Chair presented the results of the Committee's deliberations to the meeting of the Synthesis Group, Sonning, United Kingdom, 4-7 October. TAC's two final reports - on vision and strategy and structure and governance - are made available to the Group at the present meeting.

(c) Recommending resource allocations and monitoring programme implementation.

8. TAC 79 reviewed the 2001 Financing Plans prepared by the CGIAR Centres. Financial analyses of the plans had been compiled and synthesized by the CGIAR Secretariat and made available to TAC. The Committee assessed the implications of the plans for CGIAR priorities and strategies, their consistency with the Centres' Medium-Term Plans, their conformity with the 2001 Research Agenda approved by the Group at MTM'00, and the programmatic implications of potential financing gaps. TAC then prepared a report to the Finance Committee certifying that the 2001 financing plans for all Centres were broadly congruent with the Research Agenda endorsed by the Group at MTM. The Committee reemphasized to the Group some of the broad concerns which it had raised in its initial analysis of the 2001 Research Agenda. The report has been made available to ICW'00.

(d) Reviewing strategic considerations within the external environment.

9. TAC's on-going work on the System's likely research portfolio in 2010 contributed to the Vision and Strategy exercise in that a number of the themes under study were central to the Committee's thinking as it developed the CGIAR's new programme strategy - particularly, developments in intellectual property rights, molecular

biology and biotechnology, production ecology, international legal and regulatory frameworks affecting genetic resources, information and communications technology, and factors influencing poverty. With regard to the last mentioned, TAC commissioned a study by IFPRI on *CGIAR Research and Poverty Reduction*. Now that the vision and strategy exercise has been completed, the Committee will revisit its plan to systematically investigate these and other domains likely to influence CGIAR priorities and strategies by convening panels of outside experts and commissioning in-depth studies. The Committee continues to follow the activities of inter-centre mechanisms for INRM and Climate Change as a complement to its monitoring function. As well, it participates on the Genetic Resources Policy Committee.

(e) *Ensuring assessment of the CGIAR System's impact.*

10. Following-up the decision by the Co-sponsors at ICW'99, TAC has taken steps to progressively integrate the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (formerly IAEG) into the Committee's work. To further develop co-ordination of the impact assessment activities of SPIA with those of TAC's Standing Committees on Priorities and Strategies (SCOPAS) and on External Reviews (SCOER), the Chairs of these committees will have cross-membership on SPIA and vice versa. In keeping with its "arms length" status *vis-à-vis* TAC, SPIA has reported on its activities directly to the Group under a separate agenda item.

A Closing Remark

I would like to close by saying that, during the past year, TAC has been intensively involved in the task with which it was entrusted by the Group at ICW'99 - namely, to lead in concert with other stakeholders, the CGIAR's Vision and Strategy exercise. In carrying out this responsibility, the Committee's work has been facilitated by the cooperation of the Centres, Board Chairs, and Members as well as by the CGIAR Secretariat, other CGIAR advisory committees, the Global Forum for Agricultural Research, and the many individuals who participated in the two electronic conferences. It is our hope that the spirit of participation which characterized this exercise will continue as the CGIAR seeks to reposition itself in the global agricultural research system.