

Chairman's Announcements, Monday, Oct. 26, ICW98

Ladies and gentlemen.

The established practice has been for me to open this meeting with a policy statement. I will not do so today, however, because I do not wish to pre-empt Maurice Strong and the distinguished members of the System Review panel who will shortly present their conclusions to you. A discussion in plenary will follow. I will offer you some comments based on that discussion. At this stage, I will only make a few announcements.

VOTES OF THANKS:

The World Bank President's unprecedented participation in our opening session was an enriching experience. We appreciate his support. On behalf of the CGIAR system, I want to place on record our appreciation of his participation in ICW98, his great interest in the CGIAR, and his many personal interventions which have ensured that Bank support for the CGIAR remains stable.

In the same spirit, let us give Maurice Strong and his distinguished colleagues on the System Review panel a special welcome. The panel, a powerhouse of intellect and a bastion of credibility, was conscientious and thorough. They consulted widely, listened carefully, and covered much ground in their report.

A review panel is required to assess the current state of the institution they are examining, before suggesting changes or adjustments for the future. In the first part of their task, they have given the CGIAR a ringing endorsement. In the second, they have advised us to celebrate our strengths but confront our weaknesses. We welcome the endorsement and the advice. We are particularly encouraged by the assertion that "there can be no long-term agenda for eradicating poverty, ending hunger, and ensuring sustainable food security without the CGIAR."

Their suggestions for the future have been carefully crafted into a set of 126 recommendations arranged under 29 thematic headings. We should not attempt to tinker with words and phrases, but respond to the broad themes proposed as a framework for the future. I am particularly pleased – but not surprised – that the panel does not seek to force a set of prescriptions on the CGIAR but, instead, invites the CGIAR itself to "choose carefully the projects and programs that it emphasizes." Thus, we should look on the System Review not as a road map but as a compass.

The system review challenges us to shape our future. It challenges us to seize the opportunities of dazzling new developments in the world of science. It challenges us to be the catalyst of a new international order of partnership. Above all, it challenges us to ensure that whatever we attempt or achieve will help to rescue and strengthen diminished human lives.

I thank the System Review panel chair, panel members, sub-panel members, the executive secretary, system review secretariat staff, and all others who participated in and contributed to the third system review.

Please join me in acknowledging our appreciation in the customary CGIAR manner, with a round of applause.

I have a number of announcements to make. May I suggest that you hold the applause until the end of my announcements, when we can engage in a collective round of acclamation. Thank you.

WELCOME:

Uganda is represented for the first time, and we are delighted by that country's presence at the CGIAR table. I extend a warm welcome to all newcomers as well as those who have been with us before. I especially welcome the observers from Uruguay and Venezuela. We hope to greet them as full members soon.

COMINGS AND GOINGS:

We will be saying farewell to a number of our colleagues at a formal ceremony later this week, and I will reserve comment on them until then. Meanwhile, let me get on with other comings and goings.

Cosponsors

I am delighted to welcome a strayed sheep that has returned to the fold. Alex McCalla, whose association with the CGIAR runs wide and deep, is back with us as the World Bank's cosponsor representative. One of my predecessors described Alex as "a class act with a great wisdom and a loud voice." I can assure you that all are in peak condition. We anticipate wise counsel from him during our consideration of the system review and, of course, thereafter.

Centers

Bob Havener will be ending his multi-purpose term at CIAT in December. He was chair, then acting Director General, then chair again, while serving concurrently as the Director General of IRRI. He now moves to the ICARDA board, where he has already been named as chair-designate.

We welcome the new Director General of IRRI, Ronald P. Cantrell, who is attending Centers Week for the first time in his current capacity. Ron Cantrell is the former head of CIMMYT's maize program. His extensive experience as an academic, researcher, and manager spans developing country institutions, the private sector, and universities. We are confident that IRRI will thrive under his leadership.

Dick van Sloten returns home to the Netherlands after some twenty years at IPGRI. As acting Director General of the then IBPGR, he successfully

negotiated its transformation into a fully independent and fully international research center. We will miss him, and we wish him well in his new endeavors.

NARS

Fernando Chaparro, who has ended his term as chairman of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research, is the new Executive Secretary of the NARS Secretariat at FAO. So we will continue to benefit from his support.

HONORS AND AWARDS:

Ruth Haug, our colleague from Norway, has been honored by her *alma mater*. The University of Maryland, where she received her Ph.D, has granted her its Distinguished International Alumna Award for her services to international agricultural research. We are delighted that she has been so recognized.

A large number of Center scientists have received honors and awards, beginning with Rebecca Nelson of CIP, who was awarded the prestigious MacArthur fellowship, for her research on infectious mechanisms of agricultural pathogens and for her work with farmers. The full list of honorees is extensive. We share their pride and respect their efforts. I have asked that all the details be published in the CGIAR Newsletter, together with information about other outstanding developments at the Centers.

MID-TERM MEETING 1999:

The Government of the Peoples Republic of China has invited the CGIAR to hold its mid-term meeting in Beijing next year. I thank next year's hosts for the invitation. MTM99 will take place on May 24 through 28.

Now, please join me in a round of applause.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Let us move on to the adoption of the agenda.

The System Review is the primary agenda item at ICW98, but we do have a number of other important items that deserve close attention. These include:

- The research agenda for 1999, and funding prospects,
- Kenya will report on innovative mechanisms for strengthening agricultural research,
- Biotechnology and proprietary science issues, following on discussions at a number of previous meetings, most recently in Brasilia,
- Trends in financing agricultural research,
- External Reviews, and
- Reports from the various CGIAR committees.

Colombian research efforts will be featured on the agenda. Colombia's support for the CGIAR has been extraordinary and exemplary. The current commitment is for a contribution of \$3 million a year for the next five years. I

commend Colombia for this heroic effort. Please give the Government and people of Colombia a special round of applause.

We can look forward as well to center presentations on the substance of CGIAR research, aptly organized around the theme of natural research management.

When we turn to consideration of the System Review, let us do so in the CGIAR spirit that encourages full discussion, respect for differing viewpoints and, most of all, concern for those whose lives will be touched by what we decide.

As a means of enhancing our deliberations, discussion of the review panel's recommendations will be structured to allow debate by the system as a whole, as well as sharply focused examination of crucial issues by three working groups dealing with the major themes of the review panel's report: science, partnerships, and governance and finance. Final decisions will, of course, be taken by the general membership in plenary session.

Each working group will be open to all members, who can self-select the group they wish to join. A core membership with a designated chair has been identified. This will guarantee that at least those members listed in the core group will participate. It is not intended to exclude any member from taking part in working group deliberations. The core members of each working group and the room in which they will meet, is listed in a note that has been distributed and is available outside.

The three working groups are expected to facilitate decisions in plenary, by formulating action-oriented proposals for decisions by the CGIAR, and recommending mechanisms and time frames for proposed actions to be implemented.

We face a particularly significant Centers Week. With commitment and determination we can together reach decisions that will place science at the service of the disadvantaged and unconnected for many years to come.

May we adopt the agenda?

Now, without further delay, let me call on Maurice Strong.