

**Chairman's Closing Statement,
International Centers Week, 1998**

THANKS:

Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have reached the end of another ICW. And do I hear sighs of relief around the table? Why not? This was, indeed, a grueling Centers Week, as well it should have been, because in the course of five days we sought to determine our role, design our strategy, and plan for our potential impact in the approaching new millennium. We did so in response to the twenty-nine themes and 126 specific recommendations contained in the third System Review of the CGIAR.

On top of that, we dealt with a number of other business matters, and heard some excellent presentations from center directors appropriately grouped under the theme of natural resources management. I will leave the summary of decisions on agenda items other than the System Review for the customary End of Meeting Report which you will be able to pick up as you leave this meeting.

But before dealing with the System Review, let me thank all those who contributed to making this meeting both interesting and substantive:

- Bank President Jim Wolfensohn for his unprecedented participation in our opening session,
- The System Review panel, for their commitment and dedication, and for providing us with a compass to chart our new directions,
- All members of the CGIAR System who participated in this week's rich and lively discussions,

- The chairs of the three working groups who faced exceptional challenges with skill and fortitude,
- The Bank-Fund conference staff who worked so hard to provide us with the logistics and setting for decision-making,
- The interpreters who helped us understand each other, and
- Alexander von der Osten and all members of the Secretariat staff who, as usual, worked superbly as a team.

Let me, as well, extend the felicitations of the CGIAR to Wilhelm van Vuure, who is about to retire from his position as Executive Secretary of EIARD. He was a familiar figure at CGIAR meetings from 1985 to 1995, as a member of the Netherlands delegation. We thank him for his support, and wish him the very best in his new life.

A round of applause to all concerned, please.

SYSTEM REVIEW:

The System Review Panel has completed its task. They gave us a ringing endorsement of past achievements, and provided us with recommendations with which to construct our own path to the future. They made it very clear that they were not dictating prescriptions to us. They expected us to shape our own future. That is our obligation.

We will not be asking the System Review panel to redraft or reshape their recommendations, following the discussions at ICW. They will, however, be engaged as necessary in connection with the editing of their report into a version for broader public distribution.

The panel's powerful endorsement of the CGIAR is already in international circulation. Mr. Wolfensohn has conveyed to the Bank's board of directors the panel's view that "investment in the CGIAR has been the single most effective

use of official development assistance (ODA), bar none. There can be no long-term agenda for eradicating poverty, ending hunger, and ensuring sustainable food security without the CGIAR.” This excerpt and others have been reported in a journal prepared in New York for the Group of 77 and in other media, particularly in the South.

Consultative Council

The responsibility for any further work in connection with System Review recommendations now rests with us.

We have made an important start here at ICW. The three working groups (covering Science, Partnerships, and Governance and Finance) have made important headway in their consideration of the System Review recommendations. On some, we could agree. On others, we need more discussions. So it was essential that we agree on a mechanism for follow-up. We agreed on the following:

- There will be a Consultative Council, broadly representative of the System, which I will convene. I want to assure you that I will personally devote my determined attention to the System Review follow-up, no less than I did in preparations for the CGIAR Ministerial-level Meeting organized by the CGIAR at Lucerne in 1995.
- Just as at that time, we called on ad hoc groups for reports (recall the Winkel Panel, the Conway Panel, and other groups), I will also seek comparable contributions from the current committees and *ad hoc* groups of the System, as and where needed.
- These will be fed into the formal deliberations of the Consultative Council – in January and possibly in March. A report, with framed decision-points, will therefore be available for study by all of you, well before we meet in Beijing.

The Consultative Council will replace the *ad hoc* stakeholder consultations that I have convened from time to time. Its primary responsibility will be to advise me on the preparation of adequate action-proposals for consideration at MTM99. Meetings of the Consultative Council will be open to all members of the System who wish to attend. As the name implies, its mode and tasks will be entirely consultative. Decisions will be taken in plenary and only in plenary at MTM99.

Let me move on, now, to my summation of decisions.

Mission Statement, Role, and Culture

The new mission statement emphasizing food security and poverty eradication proposed by the System Review was adopted. It reads as follows:

To contribute to food security and poverty eradication in developing countries through research, partnership, capacity building, and policy support, promoting sustainable agricultural development based on the environmentally sound management of natural resources.

Each center could follow up by adopting a congruent mission statement. The centers must continue to function as global centers of frontier science, creating strong synergies across the system, and working through creative partnerships to bring advanced science and technology as well as traditional scientific knowledge to bear on the needs of the world's poor.

Science

The main thrusts of the System Review recommendations in the area of science concerned integrated gene management and integrated natural resources management. These thrusts were broadly endorsed.

In keeping with the established rhythm of our meetings, the System Review's recommendations on science issues will now feed into the responsibilities of

TAC and the Centers as they prepare the research agenda for the year 2000. That agenda will be presented to us at MTM99.

Partnerships

ICW98 endorsed the goals and principles embodied in the Panel's recommendations on broadening CGIAR partnerships. The Group agreed to design, adopt and implement more effective consultative processes, both within the System and with external partners. This will include partnership arrangements with a large number of institutions seeking to work with African research organizations. We are fully committed to supporting African initiatives.

In other respects, the existing internal institutional arrangements (such as the NGO Committee and the Private Sector Committee) would continue. The Global Forum on International Agricultural Research will be supported as an important device for external partnerships.

Governance and Finance

The strategic thrust of the System Review recommendations relating to the CGIAR's governance and financing arrangements was endorsed, but further deliberation is required in a number of areas.

Items on which agreement was reached include:

- streamlining evaluation processes,
- linking IAEG more closely with TAC,
- improving the efficiency of TAC,
- the importance of a continued, prominent role for the World Bank in the CGIAR,
- improving long-term financial prospects, and,

- improving the efficiency of decision making in the CGIAR (involving both structures and processes of decision making).

That, under the various headings, represents the consensus we reached. There are a number of issues on which consensus remains to be reached. These include questions relating to patenting, streamlined decision-making, and the suggestion that the CGIAR should acquire a legal persona. The Secretariat will comb the ICW98 transcripts, and compile a full list of outstanding issues. This list will be the heartland of deliberations by the Consultative Council and its preparations for decisions at ICW98.

SCIENCE IN A CHANGING WORLD:

Ladies and Gentlemen.

The nuts and bolts of discussion should not divert our attention from the broad sweep of science-based proposals in the System Review. These invite us to benefit from and provide leadership to the great scientific adventures now unfolding. We all know that Senator Glenn was on board yesterday's space shuttle. He was not alone. The shuttle's powerful payload included 1000 soy bean seedlings immersed in water, for experiments on microgravity and gene transfers. This may be too futuristic for us. But it suggests the directions in which the world is moving.

This does not mean that we should turn our back on downstream research. Lowell Hardin's moving story continues today as shown in ICLARM's video (screened here yesterday) which showed us how changes in pond management can bring food, income, and self-esteem to poor villagers. WARDA's video, similarly, showed how Bintun benefited from her rice. These illustrations should also have demonstrated that we dare not lose any opportunity to bring cutting edge science to bear on the needs of the very poor. The cutting edge is on the move!

We live in a time of unmatched scientific innovation. For the biological sciences, it is particularly exciting, similar to what physics experienced in the glorious 40 years between 1905 and 1945, when all the concepts were changed, from cosmology to quantum physics, from relativity to the structure of the atoms. Today we are decoding the very blueprints of life. We are learning to manage the deployment and expression of genes. Like physics in the first half of this century, we are confronted by profound ethical and safety issues, complicated by the new issues of proprietary science. We must have the courage of our convictions as well as the wisdom to know how and where to act.

As we approach the next millennium, some observers fear that scientific discoveries seem to raise as many questions as they answer. Why not? That condition is not to be deplored but to be enjoyed. The realm of scientific discovery is not only a realm of answers, but one of questions. Perhaps modern researchers are not discoverers at all but rather what Daniel J. Boorstin called “questers” whose achievements are measured not in the finality of answers, but in the fertility of questions.

But remember: our quest is motivated by our deep commitment to transform agricultural production in the world for the benefit of the poor and the environment. By helping the world to gain a better understanding of the complex interactions among physical, biological, and social systems, research can empower the international community to create a new agricultural regime that is development-oriented, sustainable, and fair. That is the challenge of today...and tomorrow.

PERSONALLY SPEAKING:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the issues which energized ICW98, let me move to something more personal. Many of you have spoken to me during this week, and yes, I am a candidate for the position of Director-General of UNESCO, to succeed Federico Mayor who is retiring next year. However, that election is only in November 1999, so I will be with you in laying the foundations for our new beginning in the year ahead, and who knows, perhaps for much longer, should the votes favor another candidate.

I am honored that the government of my country, Egypt, has nominated me for this position, and that the heads of state of the African countries endorsed my candidacy at their summit in June 1998. I hope to earn the support of other governments. However, I consider myself the candidate of the stakeholders of UNESCO, those committed to its ideals, women and men of vision such as yourselves, who till the fields of science, education, culture and communications. I hope they will see me as their candidate.

The founders of the organization who drafted UNESCO's charter had the prescience to create an institution devoted to peace, justice and human dignity; and they identified clearly and lucidly the critical importance of education, science and culture in meeting the challenges of this world. Half a century later, despite the enormous advances in science, literacy and education, and the end of the cold war which had distorted international relations, the challenges remain formidable. Today, on the eve of the third millennium, the world needs a strong and vibrant UNESCO more than ever.

The nobility of UNESCO's mission and purpose, as described in the charter of the organization, inspires and challenges me. I am convinced, too, that should the future take me to UNESCO, I will be continuing to serve the CGIAR and its clients, and will be your most ardent advocate in the various fora of science,

education, and culture. It would mean a lot to me to know that this candidacy meets with your approval and benefits from your support.

CONCLUSION:

But enough said about myself. This has not been a meeting about me, or about you, or even about the scientists who labor in CGIAR centers. This is a meeting about the farmers of the developing world and their partners, developing country consumers. How will we serve them better? That is the question.

So I tell you: this has been a meeting about how science can open the way to vistas of progress in the new millennium, but only if science is fully and effectively mobilized. This has been a meeting about how the CGIAR will participate in that mobilization. Remember, again, the stirring words of the System Review. Remember them again and again: "Investment in the CGIAR has been the single most effective use of ODA bar none." That's not investment in heavy-yielding, quick-return, miracle funds. That's investment in science for the poor.

Lowell Hardin talked the other day about the magic of the CGIAR. The dynamic of this Group has changed but the magic remains powerful and permanent. To know that Colombia has increased its contributions above those of many richer countries is part of the magic. So is the fact that Kenya has so much confidence in the CGIAR that it borrowed World Bank funds to invest in the CGIAR. We as a System can never let down those who believe in the CGIAR. We owe them our response. We owe them our support. We owe them our unremitting support.

My friends. The System Review has given us a compass. Let us use it to chart directions that will empower the weak and endow the poor, so that the weakest in society can soon reach out to what is now beyond their grasp. I wish you safe journeys home.

Thank you.