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Charting the CGIAR's Future – A New Vision for 2010
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Composition of the Consultative Council

The attached briefing note, prepared for the April 10 meeting of the Consultative Council, traces the origin and functioning of the Council, and outlines some options for its future composition. It is being circulated for information.

TO: Members of the CGIAR Consultative Council

FROM: The Secretariat

Date: March 28, 2000

Composition of the CGIAR Consultative Council

Introduction: At its 1999 Mid-Term Meeting (MTM99) in Beijing, the Group:

“recognized that the Consultative Council had operated very well and empowered the Chairman to call a Council into session as and when required, on the clear understanding that the Council will be reduced in size. The convening of the Council is not going to replace the mid-term meetings. The Council should prepare but not take decisions for the CGIAR.”¹

The future composition of the Council has been placed on the agenda of the Consultative Council meeting of April 10-11, 2000, so that a recommendation may be presented to the Group for decision at its 2000 Mid-Term Meeting (MTM00) in Dresden. This background note briefly traces the origin and functioning of the Council, and outlines some options for its future composition.

Origin and Functioning: At ICW98 the CGIAR entrusted an *ad hoc* Consultative Council with the responsibility of following up discussions of the Third System Review (TSR), and of advising the Group on the implementation of TSR recommendations. The Council met for the first time in Brussels on January 28-29, 1999, and submitted its report for consideration by the Group at MTM99. The Council met again during International Centers Week in 1999 (ICW99) to consider propositions concerning the leadership of the CGIAR, as well as its new vision and future structure. The next meeting (Rome, April 10-11) will review TAC’s draft vision statement, provide TAC with guidance on development of the draft, and report to the Group at MTM00.

Effectiveness: From its inception, the Council has been expected to serve as a facilitator, by reviewing issues periodically, and distilling the issues into a format that will sharpen discussion and decisions, thereby enabling the Group to go directly to the core of the issues, making full productive use of its time at plenary meetings. The Council does not reach decisions, but submits recommendations to the Group for decisions.

Within these specific terms of reference, the Council has demonstrated its effectiveness in a short time. The twenty-eight recommendations crafted at its first meeting enabled the Group to bring the TSR to closure at MTM99. Similarly, the Council’s usefulness as a facilitator was demonstrated at ICW99, when its preliminary examination and distillation of issues provided for a rich discussion and for an expeditious decision by the Group to launch a visioning exercise for the CGIAR System.

Basis of Composition: The composition of the current Consultative Council is based on the following principles:

¹ CGIAR 199 Mid-Term Meeting, Summary of Proceedings and Decisions, p41.

- Balanced representation, with provision for regular rotation,
- Inclusion of major constituencies, e.g. members, the centers, CGIAR standing committees, partnership committees, and
- Recognition of donor effort.

Member representatives of the council are to be selected by the constituencies in caucus. Each member constituency is expected to decide on a pattern of rotation. The chair of each major CGIAR standing committee and partnership committee serves as an *ex-officio* member of the council. The CBC and CDC is each represented, *ex-officio*, by the committee chair and another committee member.

The initial composition of the Council as constituted on this basis of constituency representation, with a membership of **29**, is illustrated in the matrix at Annex 1.

Two changes have occurred in the composition of the Consultative Council since it met at ICW99:

- the World Bank, which was originally represented as Chair of the Finance Committee (FC), does not hold that position at present, and is now represented as a member of the Cosponsors' constituency, and
- the chairman of the recently formed Science Partnership Committee has been added to the Council's membership.

This brings the membership up to **31** (See Annex 2). In practice, however, the number is **30**, because the FC Chairman functions concurrently as Canada's representative.

Future Options: The representative character of the Council makes it a microcosm of the CGIAR System. All viewpoints are represented in the Council. In most instances, Council members have taken positions at the Council after consultations within the constituency. Thus, the full range of experience across the System has been tapped in the formulation of proposals from the Council to the Group. The principle of rotation, moreover, ensures that all member delegations will have a "place at the table" over time. Taking these considerations into account, the following options are presented for consideration:

Option #1 – Temporary Maintenance of the *Status Quo*, a Thirty-one Member Council

The visioning exercise underway is expected to lead to some element of restructuring of the CGIAR System. This is quite likely to require a re-evaluation of all existing governing structures to ensure their effectiveness in relation to the restructured System. Under these circumstances, changes made now might be overtaken by other adjustments following completion of the expected restructuring exercise. Frequent changes sometimes undermine good governance. This risk would be reduced if the current Consultative Council continues "as is" until after the restructuring exercise and other consequent changes, if any, have been completed. Like any other option, this too would need the approval of the Group as a whole.

Option #2 – Council of Twenty-one Members

A reduction in the number of several constituency representatives would reduce the size of the Council from 31 to **21**. The principle of balanced representation will be maintained, but recognition of donor effort will suffer to some extent. The practice of selection by caucus, and of rotation, will remain intact. *Ex-officio* representation on the Council will also be reduced by representation of partnership committees being dropped to one Council member, to be selected by the three committee chairs in consultation with their committee members and, if necessary, the CGIAR Chairman.

Option #3 – Council of Fifteen Members

A 15-member Council could be created by the following measures:

- Reduce number of all membership representatives other than Cosponsors,
- Reduce CBC and CDC representation to one per committee,
- Eliminate partnership committee representation, but provide for the Chairman to invite one or more partnership committee chairs to attend a Council meeting as observers, based on the nature of the items on the agenda.

The principle of balanced representation and recognition of donor effort would be affected under this option. The principles of selection by caucus and of rotation would be maintained, but rotation may have to be frequent so that all members have a fair chance of serving on the Council within a reasonable period of time.

(See Annex 3 for a matrix illustrating Options 1, 2, and 3.)

Option #4 -- Dissolution

Dissolve the Council and replace it with a mechanism with a mandate appropriate to whatever program of restructuring is adopted by the Group.

Implementation: The visioning and restructuring exercise will need to be supported through the end of the 2000 International Centers Week. Whatever decision is taken at MTM00 on the future composition of the Council, it would therefore be practical, in the interests of effectiveness and continuity, for the current Consultative Council to remain in place until that process has ended. The MTM00 decision(s) could then be implemented from January 1, 2001.