

AB C DHI

May 22, 2000

Dear Colleagues:

Meeting of the Consultative Council, Saturday May 20, Dresden

In my letter of April 20, reporting on the Rome meeting of the Consultative Council, I informed you that the Council would meet again in Dresden to consider additional material from TAC.

The Council met in Dresden on May 20, when TAC Chair Emil Javier presented and reviewed the "Companion Paper" (to the Vision paper) that has been prepared for MTM2000.

Emil's presentation focused on the seven key principles of the proposed vision, i.e. the original six, and a seventh that stressed the role of the CGIAR as catalyst and integrator; and on a definition of the CGIAR "heartland."

The Council members expressed broad support for the substance of the Companion Paper, in particular, its approach to natural resource management. They said that they were comfortable with TAC's formulation on Task Forces, which amounted to a reaffirmation of a practice already in use by the centers. They suggested, however, that in their view priority setting should not be based exclusively on a geographic perspective.

A range of viewpoints was expressed in the ensuing discussion, both on concepts and practice. The main points made included the following:

- **Poverty Focus:** Poverty alleviation should be considered the principal lens through which the CGIAR looks at issues and problems.
- **Modern Science:**
 - With the revolution in genomics, agricultural research will increasingly focus on DNA, which offers opportunities for efficient global approaches.
 - The role of the private sector in agricultural research, and the consequent emphasis on patents presents the CGIAR and its partners with the need for a creative response.
 - Trusteeship of germplasm may be considered a discrete activity that preserves an important component of the human heritage.
 - For many NARS access to genetic resources and benefit sharing are inseparable concerns. The genetic resources and intellectual property regime evolving through international agreements have an important bearing on how the CGIAR could best address these issues structurally.
 - Functions for which the CGIAR System has no precedent may need new structures or institutions to deal with them.
- **Focus on South Asia and SSA:** The vision and strategy proposed by TAC reconfirms the CGIAR's current practice of devoting over two-thirds of its resources to problems of these two regions and should be endorsed.

- **A Clearer Regional Approach** was needed to capture the heterogeneity of poverty in the regions. Both geographic and ecoregional approaches to research organization are relevant at different points on the spectrum, from priority setting to scientific research to application and impact.
- **Diversifying and Closely Integrating Partnerships:** The CGIAR should integrate its activities more closely with development agencies engaged with complementary activities that would help poverty reduction in the developing countries.
- **Task Forces:** These will become more and more important in the future as an organizational design feature of research. The CGIAR will need to learn from its experiences with systemwide programs to improve the efficiency of collaborative activities.
- **Catalytic, Integrator Role:** The CGIAR should continue to serve as a catalyst, organizer, coordinator and integrator of global research efforts to address key constraints or take advantage of significant opportunities in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

Based on Emil Javier's presentation and the discussion, the Council agreed to ask the CDC and CBC to develop an action plan to develop organizational options, along with their potential financing arrangements. These proposals should be reviewed by TAC prior to their presentation to the CGIAR. Kurt Peters and Per Pinstrup-Anderson indicated that the CBC and CDC had already set up working groups to address these issues.

The Council agreed that the following consensus should be recommended to the Group:

The Council recommends:

- Adoption of the seven elements of strategy presented by TAC, and TAC's definition of the CGIAR heartland.
- Discussion of any proposals on structure the centers are ready to discuss at MTM2000.
- Adoption of an action plan as well as a schedule of next steps to deal with issues of strategy and structure following the Dresden meeting.

I will deal further with these and connected matters during MTM.

Sincerely,

Ismail Serageldin