

Report of the 21st Meeting of the CGIAR Oversight Committee

**Durban, South Africa
The Royal Hotel - 19-20th May 2001**

The CGIAR Oversight Committee (OC) held its 21st Meeting at the Royal Hotel in Durban, South Africa between May 19-20, 2001, in conjunction with the CGIAR's Mid-Term Meeting 2001.

Participating in the meeting were: Andrew Bennett (Chair), Ruth Haug, Gilles St Martin, Emmy Simmons, Juan Lucas Restrepo, Bongiwwe Njobe and Selçuk Özgediz (Secretary). Apologies – Zhao Longywe

The OC agenda consisted of the following items:

- 1. Introduction*
- 2. Change Design and Management Team Report*
- 3. Due Diligence – System Governance*
- 4. Due Diligence – Centre Governance*
- 5. Oversight Committee Membership*
- 6. Interactions*
- 7. Any other Business*

1. Introduction

The Chairman welcomed the members on the Committee, noting that this could be the last meeting of the OC, if the recommendations of the CDMT are agreed.

The agenda was adopted.

The OC thanked Selçuk Özgediz and the CGIAR Secretariat for following-up the recommendation of OC20 to set up a 'web-site' – www.cgiar.org/evaluate/eval.htm - providing information on the reviews and evaluations completed and underway in the CGIAR. It was agreed that the web-site should be on-view and demonstrated at ICW 2001.

2. Change Design and Management

The OC thought that the CDMT report was an excellent piece of work and wished to congratulate Maggie Catley-Carsen and her team on an exemplary open process and the speed at which they had produced their report. The OC agreed that it would be important to reach agreement in Durban on the first order issues. The structure, openness and time

given to open discussion of the report would be an important element in the process of reaching consensus. The more open the sessions could be, the better, as the views of the stakeholders would be an essential ingredient in reaching agreement.

The OC considered the key issues as set out in the Chairman's letter:

- **Global Challenge Programmes**
- **Executive Council**
- **Science Council**
- **System Office and unified communications strategy**

However it was recognized that, and agreed that these constituted the first order decisions to be made at MTM. The OC recognized that the second level issues (e.g., long-term financing, mergers and clusters, and emphasis on NARS and on regional priority setting) would have an impact on the discussions and urged its members to comment on them as appropriate in the working groups. Time should be allocated to have these issues discussed adequately in the CGIAR at a future meeting.

3. Due Diligence–System Governance

- **Co-sponsors**

It was noted that UNDP was having difficulty in playing their full role as a co-sponsor of the CGIAR and the IFAD was interested in playing a fuller role in the system. The Co-sponsors had played important roles in funding and in many other ways, e.g. FAO and the World Bank in supporting TAC and SPIA. They could continue to support the evolution of the CGIAR. However it will be important to redefine or clarify their role in the future in respect to the new Executive Council.

- **Organization of MTM 2001**

The OC discussed the proposed programme of working groups and participation in the closed sessions that would consider the report of the CDMT. It was keen to ensure that adequate opportunities were created for discussion of the conclusions and recommendations, so as to ensure wide ownership of the emerging consensus.

This was achieved as the agenda was modified.

- **Suggestions for agenda and organization of ICW 2001**

This should be a task for the Executive Council or a sub-group of the Council.

4. Due Diligence – Centre Governance

- **CIFOR, ICRAF, ILRI and IITA – DG Succession**

The OC noted the open and systematic processes followed in identifying and short-listing candidate for the posts of DG at these Centre. It congratulates and welcomes the successful candidates; however it was disappointed that none of these processes had resulted in the appointment of any women or 'southern' country candidates to these

senior posts. Given the importance and high priority that the CGIAR gives to improving diversity at the top of the System, it recommends that the Executive Council develops guidance and, if necessary, norms that should followed in future appointments to Boards and senior positions.

- **EPMRs**

The OC noted that an EP MR was recently completed at IITA and one was being planned for CIP. The OC recommends that the Executive Council should develop a means of monitoring the actions taken and reporting on progress made in implementing the conclusions and recommendations of future EP MRs at the Centres.

- **Mergers**

The OC noted that agreement had now been reached on incorporating the programmes of IBSRAM with those of IWMI. Plans had been discussed by TAC at its meeting at ICARDA. It looks forward to the discussion of the merged programme at a future CGIAR meeting.

The OC also noted that discussions were underway between TSBF and ICRAF and CIAT over the possibility of a similar strategic alliance of TSBF with one of the CGIAR centers. It would be important for the merging parties to carry out processes of due diligence and to seek the endorsement of TAC and of the CGIAR to the merger.

- **CGIAR Nominees for Centre Boards**

The OC discussed a proposal from the CBC for the handling of future CGIAR nominees to the Boards of the Centres. It concluded that the proposals did not satisfy the need for a more pro-active approach to encouraging diversity in the membership of the Boards. The OC recommends that this be an issue taken up by the Executive Council.

5. OC Membership

Given the conclusions and recommendations of the CDMT it was concluded that this did not require discussion. However it was noted that the members of the OC would be playing an important role in the setting up of the proposed Executive Council.

6. Interactions

The OC interacted with the Chairman and Finance Committee on the conclusions and recommendations of the CDMT. They were also briefed on the report on the financial out-turn for 2000 and prospects for 2001 by the Finance Committee. They noted that while the overall financial position was reasonably strong, some individual Centres were in a weaker position. They noted the World Bank proposed to reduce its 'matching funding contributions' to the Centres and was keen that the implications of these reductions were spelt out as soon as possible.

7. Any Other Business

- **The Role of the CGIAR in forthcoming international events**

The OC noted that there were a series of important opportunities over the coming the coming year for the CGIAR to demonstrate its relevance and to influence discussions and negotiations. These are:

- The G8 Genoa Summit – July 2001
- The World Food Summit – Five Years Later – November 2001
- The World Trade Organisation negotiations - ??
- The World Summit on Sustainable Development – September 2002

It would be important for any ‘Communications Strategy’ to identify how these events might be approached and a unified system position presented.

The OC received an update on the Millenium Africa Program and the opportunity it presents for building synergy with the work of the CGIAR (possibly, through a challenge program.)

- **The Role of Genetic Resources Policy Committee in preparations for International negotiations**

The OC recognizes that it is important for the CGIAR and the IARCs to influence the international debates on key issues, such as the negotiations on the International Undertaking and in the CBD. However it must also be sensitive to the individual national positions of the Members in these negotiations. It might be useful to discuss at ICW/AGM the means by which CGIAR statements might be cleared by the Members.

Finally as this is the last OC report to the Members of the CGIAR – we would like to place on record our thanks to:

- the CGIAR for the trust they have placed in the OC and the support they have given;
- members of the OC past and present for their hard work and dedication to the System
- the CGIAR Secretariat and particularly Selçuk Özgediz for help and assistance in many ways.