

Conclusions and Recommendations of Parallel Session II Agenda Item 8 (a) . External Review of ICRISAT

The External Review of ICRISAT was discussed by the CGIAR in Parallel Session II with Mervat Badawi as Chair. Ronnie Coffman, Chair of the Review Panel presented a summary of the Panel's findings and recommendations. He highlighted the important changes that have occurred at ICRISAT and pointed out the center's accomplishments during the review period. He also noted shortfalls in certain areas of concern and offered a new vision and strategic direction for future ICRISAT.

R.S. Paroda, Board Chair of ICRISAT, informed the members that the Board concurred with the Panel's conclusions and recommendations. He noted that some of the major recommendations are already being implemented. James Ryan, Director General, presented the response of the management and pointed out the specific areas where the center has initiated changes in accordance with some of the Review Panel's recommendations.

Ted Henzell, TAC member, presented the Committee's commentary on the outcome of the review. TAC supports the major conclusions and recommendations of the Panel.

In the discussions, the CGIAR members complimented the review panel for clearly defining the programmatic and management issues faced by the center and for offering recommendations to address them. They recognized that, to some extent, the problems encountered by the center could be attributed to the reduced funding that it has experienced. They highlighted and endorsed the following recommendations:

- need for a clearly formulated operational mandate;
- focus on research work where the center has comparative advantage at regional and global levels;
- strategic realignment of ICRISAT by adopting the strategic partnership model (components of this model include global germplasm research in Patancheru, concentration of natural management research in Africa, and research partnerships and networking via ecoregional approaches); however, some concerns were expressed on the synergism that might be lost as a result of programme separation;
- fostering of effective partnership with NARS as part of its operational strategies.

The members were pleased that significant changes have occurred in the center during the past few months. The Board was reorganized and a new Director General has been selected. Furthermore, to the credit of the outgoing Director General, efforts are underway for a smooth and orderly transfer of management.

The members also supported TAC's recommendation that a briefing on actions taken by the Board and management on the recommendations be presented to TAC in its September, 1997 meeting.

In concluding the discussion, Mervat Badawi expressed optimism on the future of ICRISAT given the reaffirmation of the center's role in contributing to agricultural development in semi-arid tropics and the assurance of continued support from the members.