

CGIAR Mid-Term Meeting 1997

Preliminary End-of-Meeting Report

[The 1997 Mid-Term Meeting of the CGIAR was held in Cairo from May 26-30, 1997. A "Summary of Proceedings and Decisions will be published" by CGIAR Secretariat. The notes below represent a preliminary summary of highlights. It is not a comprehensive, official record.]

1. **Formal Opening.** MTM97 was formally opened at a luncheon ceremony featuring H. E Youssuf Wally, Deputy Prime Minister of Egypt, CGIAR Chairman Ismail Serageldin, and other distinguished guests from the Egyptian Government and the CGIAR system, and attended by MTM97 participants. In remarks delivered during the formal opening, Professor Wally expressed his full support for the work of the CGIAR and its importance to developing countries such as Egypt. At the conclusion of the formal opening, a CGIAR slide presentation on "Challenges in the WANA Region" was screened.

The Prime Minister of Egypt received, during MTM97, a delegation of CGIAR representatives and key stakeholders led by the CGIAR Chairman.

2. **Chairman's Opening Address.** The CGIAR Chairman delivered his opening address during the formal opening ceremony, and spoke on the research programs and policies that will enable the CGIAR to mobilize cutting edge science as an instrument for achieving sustainable agriculture for food security in the twenty-first century. He emphasized, in particular, the importance of substantially enhancing the CGIAR's capacity in the area of biotechnology.

[Note: The full text of Mr. Serageldin's address was available in Cairo and will be included in the secretariat's "Summary of Proceedings and Decisions" of MTM97.]

3. **Comings and Goings.** The Group paid warm tribute to all those serving as board chairs and center directors, for whom this would be their last meeting, and welcomed new board chairs and centers directors to MTM97.

4. **New and Potential Members.** Thailand was admitted to CGIAR membership by acclamation. Representatives from Greece, Morocco, and Turkey attended MTM97 as observers. Welcoming them to the meeting, Mr. Serageldin expressed the hope that all three countries would soon join the CGIAR.

5. **System Review.** The third review of the CGIAR system was discussed by the Group, and panel members present were introduced. A videotaped presentation by Review Chair Maurice Strong was screened, in which he outlined plans for the review and urged the CGIAR membership to actively participate in the review process by sharing its perspectives with panel members, both at MTM97 and throughout the conduct of the review. Issues raised in the Group's discussions of the system review

included the importance of ensuring an independent review, and the level of consultation that took place in the appointment of panel members. In several sessions, members suggested strategic issues for the consideration of the review panel. As well, several committees of the CGIAR agreed to prepare briefing papers on key aspects of the CGIAR. The Group expressed its interest in interacting closely with the panel throughout the review process.

6. Center Medium-Term Research Plans for 1998-2000. The Group received a report from the TAC Chair on the medium-term planning process in which TAC and the centers had been engaged during the past year. He outlined the major considerations which shaped operationalization of the CGIAR's priorities and strategies, the implications of TAC's analysis for allocations at the center level, and the process through which the MTPs and allocations were developed.

TAC's assessment of center MTPs was grounded in the principle elements underlying priority setting in the CGIAR, namely a people-centered focus, an emphasis on poverty alleviation and protecting natural resources for the attainment of sustainable food security, and a concern for efficiency in the pursuit of the CGIAR's goals. TAC examined alternative sources of supply for the international public goods produced by the CGIAR, probabilities of success opportunities offered by new science, and the contribution of center outputs to the CGIAR's goals with special reference to poor women and the rural poor.

TAC concluded that center efforts to increase agricultural productivity, especially in the poorest countries, will lead to poverty alleviation and protection of natural resources through rising incomes. TAC based its recommendations on a poverty weighted congruence analysis (focused on future rather than present conditions) that serves to focus research on the areas of primary importance to the poorest. TAC largely maintained the recommendations it presented at MTM96, with the exception of professional development and training, which received an increased allocation in response to the regional fora, and production systems, which was reduced. The recommendations called for:

- increasing the percentage shares allocated to CIFOR, ICRAF, ICLARM, ILRI, IIMI, and IITA;
- maintaining the current percentage shares of IFPRI, ISNAR, IPGRI, IRRI, WARDA, and ICARDA; and
- decreasing the percentage shares of CIP, CIMMYT, ICRISAT, and CIAT.

To facilitate in-depth discussion of individual center MTP proposals, each was considered in parallel session, and subsequently reported on in plenary. Several common elements characterized center MTPs.

- All centers engaged in widespread consultations with stakeholders in the development of their MIPs.
- Centers intend to make significant efforts to develop partnerships with a broad range of actors in the global research community.
- Center MTPs are more focused, strategically oriented, and more clearly related to the CGIAR's goals and priorities than in the past, and are short and effectively presented.
- The allocation process was an interactive one between centers and TAC.

Among the broad points emphasized during the Group's discussions were:

- TAC had conducted a thoughtful analysis, which was welcomed by The Group. TAC's guidance has led to higher quality MTPs.
- Centers had made significant progress in addressing poverty and gender concerns in their MTPs, and this emphasis should continue.
- Follow-up is needed to ensure the inclusion of partners in the work of the CGIAR, from planning, to the conduct of research, to evaluation.
- TAC should continue to monitor the gains from new scientific developments relevant to the CGIAR's work.
- MTPs should provide a sufficient basis for monitoring impact, to ensure that CGIAR technologies reach intended beneficiaries.

The Group endorsed TAC's recommendations for the 1998-2000 medium term planning period, including the proposed distribution of resources among centers. The finance Committee expressed its concern about the size of the \$400 million investment recommended for 2000 in view of constraints on ODA budgets. The committee, therefore, recommended that a no-growth scenario be explored, in addition to the main scenario above that was endorsed. The Group noted the recommendations of the Finance Committee, and agreed to continue to review financial requirements on an annual basis.

7. 1996 Funding and 1997 Financial Prospects. The Group received a report from the Finance Committee Chair on the 1996 financial outcome and 1997 prospects. In 1996, agenda support totaled \$304 million, as expected. Special efforts at MTM96 resulted in \$10 million in support for five centers facing financial difficulties. Due to shortfalls, four centers - CIAT, ICRISAT, IITA, and IRRI - took action to reduce staff. Disbursements by members were slower in 1996 than in 1995, and there was inadequate financing of some systemwide programs.

For 1997, aggregate center projects result in an overall estimate of funding of about \$325 million, which is in line with expectations. The Finance Committee recommended that the special action aimed at older centers that was proposed at ICW96 be implemented, resulting in allocation of \$3.2 million to CIAT, ICRISAT, and IRRI. Sufficient funding was expected to cover the requirements of the research agenda, except for ILRI and ICARDA, as well as ICRISAT, and several systemwide programs. The Group acted on the recommendation of the Finance Committee to provide an additional allocation of \$2 million to resolve these financial issues. The actions taken should ensure that the research agenda is not only fully financed at the system level, but at the level of individual centers as well. These steps indicate the priority accorded by the Group to protecting the heartland of the CGIAR research agenda and to ensuring its financing.

8. **1998 Research Agenda and Funding Requirements.** The 1998 research agenda recommended by TAC consists of center activities slated for implementation during the first year of the medium-term planning period (considered in parallel session). With regard to the financial requirements for the 1998-2000 medium-term planning period and 1998 financial prospects, the Group received a report from the Finance Committee Chair. Indicative financial requirements of \$350 million recommended by TAC represent a 7.7 percent increase over 1997 financing plans. The proposed requirements of \$350 million, however, were considered too optimistic by the Finance committee.

the Group endorsed the substance of the 1998 research agenda as recommended by TAC, adopted a financial planning target of \$335-340 million, as recommended by the Finance committee, and commissioned the preparation of center financing plans, for approval at ICW97.

9. **Biotechnology in the CGIAR.** The Chairman urged the Group to frontally address the many issues raised by the changing framework of biotechnology research and application. These issues include ethics, equity, biosafety, and proprietary science and technology. Biotechnology is a tool, to be used with other tools, to pursue the mandate of the CGIAR. The CGIAR may in fact have to increase its capacity to deploy that tool as effectively as possible.

The discussion by the Group followed on many of the points raised by the Chairman in his opening address and included:

- The CGIAR should consider biotechnology as an important research tool, which must be employed appropriately.
- There is substantial potential for biotechnology to contribute to more rapid and sustainable agricultural growth in developing countries.
- Investments in biotechnology research will need to be increased by a significant amount, a multiple of the current allocation to be realized over a period of several years.

- There is need for the development of stronger research alliances on biotechnology within the CGIAR and between centers and other institutions.
- As CGIAR generated technologies are international public goods, the CGIAR should ensure access to biotechnology products and techniques for the benefit of developing countries.
- Centers engaged in biotechnology work should help to promote the establishment of appropriate regulatory mechanisms consistent with national biosafety requirements in developing countries.

The Group reached agreement on the following points:

- The CGIAR will move ahead to increase the conduct of biotechnology research carried out by the centers.
- Two specialist panels will be created under the auspices of TAC to review biotechnology issues and to deal comprehensively with intellectual property rights issues respectively.

10. Central/Eastern Europe and Central Asia/Caucasus. The Group considered actions taken since ICW96 to implement programs in Central/Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union as endorsed at ICW96, following the recommendations of a task force on CGIAR collaboration in the region that encouraged the CGIAR, in particular, to expand substantive collaboration with Central Asian countries.

Since then, TAC has included data on Central Asian countries in the poverty analysis underpinning its medium-term recommendations for 1998-2000. As well, several center MTPs, notably ICARDA, IPGRI, CIMMYT, and ISNAR, included programs to implement the Group's decision. The Group agreed that, while some resource have been made available for start-up costs, a sustained effort is necessary to ensure that additional financial commitments will be forthcoming. The Group agreed, as well, that the CGIAR should be flexible in keeping to the "spirit" of Lucerne. Centers with potential programs in the region were encouraged to pursue them.

11. External Reviews. The external program and management reviews of three centers - ICRISAT, ISNAR, and IPGRI - were considered during MTM97. Each center's review Panel Chair, Center Board Chair and Director General, and TAC, followed by discussion - and reported on in plenary.

12. Impact Assessment and Evaluation Group. The Group received a progress report from the IAEG Chair, and subsequently discussed the IAEG in parallel session. The Group reviewed the role and function of the IAEG, its performance to-date and proposed work program, institutional concerns regarding the IAEG's support structure, and its linkages with centers. The Group emphasized the importance it places on impact assessment questions and the need to demonstrate "value for

money” within member organizations, particularly regarding agriculture’s impact on poverty.

Many diverse perceptions and expectations of the IAEG were expressed by members and centers. The cosponsors proposed action in two areas:

- strengthening the IAEG and its support structure through the addition of two new members, the establishment of a small secretariat at UNDP, and the acceptance of UNEP’s offer to second a professional to the group for one year, and
- strengthening consultation between the IAEG and TAC, the centers, and CGIAR members.

The Group concluded the following:

- The work program proposed by the IAEG was broadly endorsed, with the expectation that it would incorporate the suggestions made by the Group. In particular, the IAEG should strive to generate impact information faster and express such information in simple terms.
- The proposals of the cosponsors were endorsed, with the understanding that the UNDP arrangement is a short-term solution. The cosponsors should continue to examine other options and also review the rationale for maintaining strict independence. The IAEG’s support structure should be strong enough to cater to both the needs of the centers and of the system.
- Impact assessment in the areas of poverty and natural resources management should be accorded high priority; the IAEG should help to develop coherent and compatible databases of impact indicators in partnership with other institutions.
- The system review should examine the future role and effectiveness of the IAEG within the CGIAR’s governance structure.

The Group endorsed the work program proposed by the CGIAR as well as the recommendations of the cosponsors.

13. Positioning the CGIAR in the Global System. In an open forum in parallel session, the Group discussed and shared perspectives on the positioning of the CGIAR, within the global agricultural research system, a major focus of the system review. The discussion covered a range of issues pertaining to focus, roles, policies, norms, scientific tools, partnerships, tensions, organization, and efficiency.

Among the broad points emphasized by the Group during the discussion were:

- The key focus of the CGIAR should remain the generation of international public goods. Conserving germplasm, increasing productivity, protecting natural resources, and building capacity will likely constitute the primary

dimensions of future CGIAR work. The CGIAR will continue to be needed as a leader and focal point in people-centered, interdisciplinary, international research related to questions of natural resources management.

- In addition to continuing its traditional role as a network of institutions conducting first-rate research, the CGIAR could play additional roles, such as a catalyst of change, technology integrator, and supporter, gap filler, and critical mass creator.
- The CGIAR needs to be well connected to global developments related to policy, and to formulate or update its own policies in key areas such as genetic resources and intellectual property rights.
- The CGIAR must ensure the conduct of good science in its own and partner institutions.
- The CGIAR needs to significantly strengthen its capacity in biotechnology, and should take advantage of breakthroughs in other areas such as artificial intelligence, modern communications, and GIS, GPS, and system sciences.
- The CGIAR should increasingly operate through partnerships; in this regard, developments in the formation of regional fora and the Global Forum are encouraging.
- The CGIAR should be aware that inevitable tensions will arise as a result of changing research competencies and relations with partners, the issue of science and knowledge generation and dissemination versus institutional support and human resources development, facilitation partnerships versus sticking to the core business of knowledge generation, public goods versus intellectual property, and delivering knowledge versus reducing poverty or environmental degradation; such as tensions can be creative, but, if not properly balanced, could also be destructive.
- Change will require further re-engineering and renewal in the CGIAR; new institutional forms will be needed to conduct new science.
- The CGIAR should promote competition and make greater use of outsourcing, in order to increase its efficiency.

14. Follow-up to the Global Forum. The Group received a report from the Global Forum Steering Committee on the work of the committee and its future plans. Subsequent discussion by the Group focused on the definition of boundaries and relationships/linkages between the Global Forum and regional and subregional fora; mechanisms by which the objectives of the Global Forum will be pursued; the mandate and functions of the GFSC; and, the location of the GFSC secretariat and support for its activities.

The relative roles of the Global Forum and the regional and subregional fora were clarified. The Global Forum serves to integrate the various components of the global agricultural research system, and provides a platform for greater interaction among regional and subregional fora and other actors in the global system, such as ARIs, international centers, NGOs, and the private sector. The regional and

subregional fora play a parallel role in which NARS are the key components. This is the level at which the majority of action will take place. At all levels, the primary objective is to enhance and develop partnerships. The GFSC serves as the mechanism through which the objectives of the Global Forum are pursued; its primary role is to facilitate and coordinate implementation of the Global Forum Action Plan. It was agreed that the GFSC secretariat be based in ESDAR at the World Bank in Washington, DC.

Another secretariat, for the NARS Global Steering Committee, will be established. The NARS leaders expressed their desire to locate the secretariat at IFAD; however, subsequent discussion in the GFSC identified FAO and ISNAR as additional possibilities for the secretariat location. The GFSC suggested that the three agencies develop a mechanism, in consultation with the NARS GSC, to jointly sponsor the NARS GSC. It was recognized that the activities of the committee will need support from other donors as well.

15. **Report from the CGIAR Cosponsors.** The Group received a report from the CGIAR cosponsors on their deliberations and the decisions reached during their pre-MTM97 meeting. This was a new agenda item introduced at MTM97, in keeping with the spirit of transparency that characterizes the renewed CGIAR.

16. **Reports from CGIAR Committees.** The Group endorsed reports from the Finance Committee, Oversight Committee, TAC, Genetic Resources Policy Committee, NGO Committee, Private Sector Committee, and PARC.

17. **Future Meetings.** The dates of future CGIAR meetings will be as follows:

1997	ICW	Oct. 27-31	Washington, DC, USA
1998	MTM	May 25-29	Brazil
	ICW	Oct. 26-30	Washington, DC USA
1999	MTM	May 24-28	To be determined
	ICW	October 25-29	Washington, DC USA