

Position Of The CGIAR In The Global System

Chairman, Colleagues:

Thank you for the opportunity to share some of TAC's views on this important topic. Globalization of research in agriculture is a fact and, in significant measure, its early emergence was influenced by the CGIAR centres with their networks for germplasm improvement. Given the forces at work the future holds ever broader and deeper interaction, with evident implications for further development.

For the CGIAR, this further globalization offers promise for further efficiencies. The content of those efficiencies will depend in large measure on the strategies of national programmes, the private sector, and other players. To mention but one aspect, it will depend on the priorities set by national and regional programmes. It is clear that all actors will share the goal of reducing costs and this offers a major opportunity for common purpose. Beyond that, however, global interaction will offer great potential for catalyzing the emergence of new opportunities.

As for international public goods research, let me say first that the CGIAR will not be the only candidate for such work; all potential providers should be considered on a competitive basis--quality, costs, reliability, even handedness will be elements in competition. Now, thinking in terms of the CGIAR, what will be the future of such research? Among other things, the answer will rest partly on new science and in significant measure on the evolution of new institutional forms to guide and finance such work. As we see it, the regional fora offer one notable opening towards opportunity.

As I have said elsewhere, there are some "quintessential international public goods". The conservation of germplasm is one example and work on the pre-competitive aspects of shifting yield plateaux is another. In the future what happens via the interaction of science and the extension of proprietary rights will almost certainly shrink the domain of public goods. Clearly, these changes will influence the institutional structure of the global system and the CGIAR's role within it.

Coming back to the Global System, per se, we note that it exists today and that elements fostering its expansion are in play. TAC believes that the CGIAR is uniquely well placed to energize further expansion, to interpret its evolution, and to identify new opportunities for interaction. In concluding, let me point to TAC's intent to join others in support of the Global System.

Thank you.