

Conclusions and Recommendations of Parallel Session II Agenda Item 7. Positioning the CGIAR in the Global System

The CGIAR discussed this subject in Parallel Session II on May 29, 1997 in an open forum format under the chairmanship of R. S. Paroda. Following introduction by the Chair, several CGIAR committees shared their perspectives with the participants. These included the Committees of Board Chairs, Centre Directors, Private Sector, Genetic Resources Policy, Oversight, Finance, and TAC. (The statements made by the representatives of the first three listed committees are attached.) The Chair then invited other participants to express their views. The following is a summary of the major points made.

Focus. The generation of international public goods would remain the key focus of the CGIAR, although this domain is likely to shrink over time with the changes in ownership of intellectual property. Conserving germplasm, increasing productivity, protecting natural resources, and capacity building would likely constitute the key dimensions of future CGIAR work. The CGIAR would continue to be needed as a leader and focal point in people-centered, inter-disciplinary international research on questions of natural resources management.

Roles. In addition to continuing its traditional role as a network of institutions conducting first rate research, the CGIAR might play additional roles such as the following:

- **Catalyst of change**--promoting attention to the problems of the poor, facilitating South-South and North-South partnerships, and drawing attention to indigeneous development, the strengthening of the NARS in the South, including effective linkages with the Private Sector.
- **Technology integrator.** The CGIAR may have a distinct comparative advantage to integrate various available technologies for the benefit of the poor--from transgenic technologies to the production systems. In the future the skills most needed for innovation might be in finding, selecting, and integrating multiple and diverse technologies.
- **Supporting, gearing and gap filling, and critical mass creation.**

Policies. The CGIAR needs to be well connected to global developments on the policy front and formulate or update its own policies in key areas like genetic resources and intellectual property rights. Significant policy changes are taking place globally and shall conduct of science in forestry, fisheries, livestock, and agriculture.

Norms. Above all, the CGIAR needs to ensure the conduct of good science in its own and in partner institutions.

Scientific tools. As noted earlier in this meeting, the CGIAR needs to strengthen its capacity in biotechnology significantly. The CGIAR should take advantage of breakthroughs in other areas such as artificial intelligence, modern communications, GIS, GPS, and system sciences.

Partnerships. The CGIAR should increasingly operate through partnerships. The developments in the formation of Regional Fora and the Global Forum are encouraging. However, these fora have not yet succeeded in generating significant substantive consultation among actors and robust analytical systems to guide collective decisions. Also, partnering may need to be reinforced initially through incentives, until the emergence of mutual respect and appreciation of each other's circumstances.

Also, partnerships have high transaction costs, which should be taken into consideration in designing networks. Governance structures should be simple and unbureaucratic. Efficiency measures such as integrating priority setting in regional fora with similar activities conducted by TAC.

Tensions. There are inevitable tensions that can be creative, but if not properly balanced they could be destructive. These include:

- changing research competencies and relations between NARS, ARIs, private sector, and the IARCs;
- science and knowledge generation and dissemination vs. institutional support and human resource development;
- facilitating partnerships vs. sticking to the core business of knowledge generation;
- public goods vs. protection of intellectual property;
- delivering knowledge (output) vs. reducing poverty or environmental degradation (impact).

Organization. Changes in the above directions will require further re-engineering and renewal in the CGIAR. New institutional forms will be needed to conduct the new science that will help increase productivity for required global food security and also generation of income at farm level to reduce poverty..

Efficiency. If the CGIAR adds value, funding for its activities will be there. To increase its efficiency the CGIAR should promote competition and make greater use of outsourcing.

Dr. Paroda concluded the session by pointing out that positioning the CGIAR in the global system would be the main focus of the System Review and encouraged the participants to share these and additional views with

the Review Panel considering that the review process is an excellent uncommon opportunity. The open forum also reaffirmed its faith in the CGIAR and expressed desire to have it further strengthened and supported in future.