

## CHAIRMAN'S SUMMATION

We have now reached the end of the Mid-Term Meeting. It was a special Mid-Term Meeting because its relevance goes beyond the immediate. The agenda has focused on issues that will engage and energize the CGIAR system over the next two to three years and well into the twenty-first century. MTM97, therefore, represents a maturation of the post-Lucerne CGIAR. It is a coming of age. The CGIAR is very different, certainly in atmosphere, from where we were in Lucerne, through the various milestones, and even in Jakarta, where we were scrambling not to unravel what we had brought together.

It is a maturation in terms of the CGIAR's processes, partnerships, and membership. It has given me great pleasure to see over the last few years such an increase in the participation of developing countries as members of the CGIAR. Their presence in our committees and their participation in the shaping of our agenda and in the structuring of our governance has been profound. It is encouraging to see the partnership committees sitting at our table, not just as token representatives, but as active participants in the debate that shapes our thinking and our agenda. In many ways it has been an enlightening transformation.

To me, of course, it is a very special pleasure that this particular Mid-Term Meeting that lays the road map to the new century should be held in Egypt. Egypt is not just my country; it also was one of the first new members from the developing world to join the post-Lucerne CGIAR. It is, therefore, fitting that we should be moving forward from Egypt as a launch pad.

Egypt's agricultural scientists are demonstrating by deeds and solid results that they are determined to burnish with the best in contemporary science and technology, the ages-old motif that we know from pharaonic times "to plant seeds and watch their renewal of life, this is the commonest delight of the race, the most satisfactory thing a human being can do." From 4,500 years ago, that is quite a statement to carry with us today. Contemporary Egypt, said E. T. York, one of our own among the CGIAR alumni, "is in the midst of a dynamic agricultural transformation, highlighted by unprecedented yield gains and production of its major crops." Egyptian scientists, especially in places like the Agriculture Genetic Engineering Research Institute, are committed to a profound and far-reaching revolution.

By providing scientists with strong political support, both from the President and the Deputy Prime Minister, they created a framework that enabled scientists to exercise their art for the benefit of the Egyptian people and of future generations. We were, thus, at home and among friends in a society moved by our own concerns. Not surprisingly, therefore, our hosts have provided us with an excellent setting to grapple with the issues that are relevant to Egypt, to the region, and to the world.

I would be remiss if I did not specifically give special thanks to President Hosni Mubarak, who had agreed to meet the whole Group, and was unable to do so because he was engaged in the resumption of Middle East peace talks negotiations. Our thanks go out as well to Prime Minister Kamal El-Ganzoury, who took time out of his budget debate in Parliament to meet with the Group, as an indication of the Government's commitment to the CGIAR; to Deputy Prime Minister Youssef Wally, who has been ceaseless in his support to the CGIAR and who joined us at our opening session; and, to the Minister of Scientific Research and the Minister of Economy, who each attended some of our meetings.

To them also I need to add, of course, the marvelous work and the leadership provided by the national NARS leader, Dr. Saad Nassar, and our colleague who is also on TAC, Dr. Magdy Madkour. I would like to ask you to join me in a vote of thanks.

[Applause.]

I would also be remiss if I did not give our thanks to the CGIAR Secretariat and to ICARDA's Cairo office, lead by Dr. Mahmoud Solh, for their very effective, self-effacing, and cheerful support, and to many, many others who have made the logistics and the organization of

this Mid-Term Meeting one of the very best; also, the too frequently forgotten warriors, our interpreters. To each and every one of the interpreters, to Dr. Mahmoud Solh of ICARDA in Cairo, to the CGIAR Secretariat, to the team under Dr. Saad Nassar, and to all the others, our deep thanks.

[Applause.]

Beyond the setting, we covered a lot of material and a lot of ground. Despite the fact that not all of us were able to attend all of the meetings and some of us did not attend the meetings that they had wanted to attend, at least as was expressed in the commentary that we had, we had a productive meeting, and it is worthwhile to review some of the achievements.

We received a report from the cosponsors for the first time. We received reports from TAC, the Oversight Committee, the Finance Committee, the Genetic Resources Policy Committee, the NGO Committee, the Private Sector Committee, and PARC, all of which were endorsed. I am not going to repeat their points, but I will highlight some strands that ran through all the committee reports—a deep commitment to the mission of the CGIAR; to a certain extent a sense of excitement about the challenges ahead; a deep concern for people-centered policies and participatory approaches; a desire to ensure that the centers, that are the very heart of the CGIAR system, are well supported; an affirmation of new ways of doing business that emphasize transparency, predictability, and partnership in all of our work; and, the need for action, not just words.

We evaluated ourselves, as we frequently do. We had external program and management reviews of three centers, ICRISAT, ISNAR, and IPGRI, all of which were endorsed, reflecting a deep appreciation of the responses of the management and boards of these centers to the changing world in which we function.

A large part of our attention and concern was taken by discussions on the IAEG. The Group received an interim report from IAEG Chair Jim Peacock, who analyzed the conceptual framework of the unit's work, and described a program that was already in progress. He explained the need for the preliminary work to be of high quality, and that this has somewhat delayed the effectiveness of delivery, because the building blocks were not there. He informed the Group that an annual evaluation report would be published by the IAEG in collaboration with the CGIAR centers in due course.

The Group endorsed proposals for institutional strengthening of the IAEG. The Group also addressed some changes that were required in the IAEG's priorities. We were reminded of that in the excellent summation by Teresa Fogelberg. We also asked that the system review should examine the future role of the IAEG.

I sympathize with the need expressed by members for impact material that they can use with their own constituencies and in their own ministries. I also sympathize with the views that were expressed by the IAEG, Dr. Peacock, his colleagues, and others, that in fact what is very important is the creation of an evaluation culture, where it is not seen as an add on, but an intrinsic and implicit part of doing business. This is going to be essential for accountability, transparency, credibility, and the quality of the system's work to be ensured.

I have been thinking about some of the issues. It is important that we pay attention to what is being measured. I am aware of a report by the President of the National Academy of Sciences, a member of our system review panel, Dr. Bruce Alberts, at the 134th meeting of the National Academy of Sciences, where he pointed out that it is essential to think carefully about what you measure, because by what you measure you may distort the behavior that you are trying to evaluate. This is a very valid point.

Turning that around I would like to leave all of you with a thought that has been troubling me for a while. It is a simple thought, but I would just put it on the table. One thing that the CGIAR could do to radically transform thinking about the link between productivity and

the environment would be to report our yield figures in three units instead of one. Instead of just tons per hectare, why not measure tons per hectare, tons per cubic meter of water, and tons per units of energy? If we systematically did that, I think we would have a very different perspective on the issues of the environment, sustainability, and productivity increases. Many of these debates may not necessarily be as divergent as they now appear. It is a small thing, but I leave it for the Group to think about.

For those of you who do not come from water scarce regions like this one, I would urge you to look at some graphs that David Seckler of IIMI has on the water scarcity situation that is arising here. The dollar variation per cubic meter in various crops that he looks at goes from three to seventy-five cents. That is almost three cents to seventy cents per cubic meter in terms of return. It is not quite the tons that I was looking for, and not for the same crop, but it still gives an indication of the variability we are missing right now.

All of this leads us to the heart of what we were concerned about at this Mid-Term Meeting—the medium-term research plans of the centers. These were endorsed for the sixteen centers for the period 1998 to 2000. The plans are consistent with the priorities and strategies outlined by TAC Chair Don Winkelmann and approved by the Group. The investment level for that plan is considered high. It is going to reach, it seems, almost \$400 million by the year 2000. That figure has been somewhat tempered by the Finance Committee. Nevertheless, even after coming down to \$335 to \$340 million as an indicative figure for 1998, we are still talking about a billion dollars over three years. That is not an insignificant amount, and it will take all of the entrepreneurial talent of the Center Directors and the commitment of all of the members of the Group to make this work.

I would be remiss if I did not stop at this sentence and remind a number of us that I, like two or three people at this table, were a little bit concerned at the lack of attention to gender issues in a number of the center medium-term plans. We seriously hope that this is not so much a forgetfulness or oversight, but a step toward true integration. I think that there is more attention required on this issue.

We endorsed the substance of the 1998 research agenda, as recommended by TAC. This now calls us to go forth in the next few months with creativity and imagination in tapping different sources of funding, and matching those sources with the commitments in order to arrive at the desired results. This achievement has been done in the past. Even after the dark hours of Jakarta, where we thought everything was unraveling, the actual agenda support in 1996 totaled \$304 million. That is higher than the \$299 million that we endorsed with trepidation in Nairobi. So we actually did better than we anticipated, despite the setbacks. However, that is looking at the aggregate picture; we had serious problems at several of the centers, as you well know.

For 1997, an aggregate budget of \$325 million is anticipated. We discussed the special cases of ILRI, ICARDA, and ICRISAT. Efforts will be made to support these centers. We moved forward with a tentative figure of \$335 to \$340 million for 1998. The Group endorsed the thrust of the Finance Committee report, and expressed the need for continued financial prudence.

All of this sets the stage for what we are doing now, to position ourselves in the global system. Certainly our commitment to the system review as a way of giving us a strategic perspective of where the CGIAR should be positioned in the next fifteen to twenty years is an essential part of our commitment. The Group heard a videotaped message from Maurice Strong, the Chair of the system review, in which he stressed the need for close consultation between the members of the review panel and all members of the Group. I am delighted to welcome the panel members who attended MTM97, specifically Bongiwe Njobe-Mbuli of South Africa and Kenzo Hemmi of Japan, as well as Executive Secretary Mahendra Shah. Each of them reiterated the same spirit of openness.

We hope that we will find a way to sustain the independent spirit of the review, and providing the panel with all of the facts that they need, so we can fully benefit from the wisdom of their insights and experience. The review is now formally launched, and the first session of the

panel will be held in August. We expect that at ICW97 we will have a format that will allow for systemic interaction with the panel.

If we are positioning ourselves in a global system that is changing rapidly, we are also working with that global system as it changes. Here we come to the Global Forum follow up. The Global Forum brought together in 1996, for the first time, all of the components of the global agricultural research system in an effort to explore the needs and opportunities for research collaboration. Advanced research institutions, international and bilateral agencies, NARS, the private sector, NGOs, and CGIAR centers are all part of the global system.

What has been fascinating to me is to see the excitement and the vibrancy that has gone through these discussions as the steering committee carried out the implementation of a dream. And it was a dream when we tried to launch this exercise a few years ago, but it actually happened last fall in Washington that all of the actors came together. It was not just an event; there is follow-up. Under Willy Dar's chairmanship, we had an excellent report from the Global Forum Steering Committee, and evaluation of a common ground that is really encouraging.

I regret and I apologize to our colleagues, the regional representatives, who made an enormous effort to organize themselves more effectively than ever before, that I did not have a formal slot for them on the program. Nonetheless, they produced a document which was circulated, and presented as a commentary on the Global Forum presentation. In the future we will find ways of incorporating their views more systematically in our deliberations. I am always very happy to have the occasion to benefit from their insights in everything that we do.

We started the Mid-Term Meeting with a rather complex and controversial topic, which I had the pleasure and privilege of putting forcefully to all of you, dealing with the issue of biotechnology. It is clear that we recognize that biotechnology is a tool, that has to be used with other tools; that it is not new to the CGIAR; and that it has been the subject of discussions, studies, reports, and research. The CGIAR is devoting close to \$30 million to biotechnology today, including overheads, and \$25 million or so without overheads.

The fact is that the world around us is changing very rapidly, and we need to take account of what is happening. Huge investments are now being made in the private sector. In the United States alone, biotechnology research and development in the private sector is on the order of \$8 billion annually, with another \$2 billion annually being spent in Europe. It is a huge amount. The bulk of that, certainly, is for human and medical purposes, but there is significant overlap by many companies.

What is important for us is that any enhanced activity that involves biotechnology within the CGIAR must confront a number of issues, such as ethics, equity, safety, and a whole range of issues dealing with proprietary science. These issues started out as being areas of major concern and potential diversion and divisiveness. With the openness of spirit that everyone brought to the task, people came together, and there was broad agreement on the need for the CGIAR to intensify its attention to these issues.

Accordingly, two specialist panels are to be created under the auspices of TAC. One, to deal with biotechnology issues, ethics and equity issues, and other dimensions more generally; and, one to deal more narrowly with proprietary issues associated with science and technology. The panels will be created with full consultation among stakeholders and the CGIAR committees, and function with the same independence that we have come to expect from our stripe reviews under TAC auspices.

Whether one or two reports will be issued depends on the progress achieved. Certainly, we are hoping to move with all due deliberate speed in this area. We will make use of the best expertise within and outside of the system, recognizing the expertise that has been accumulated in ISNAR since the original BIOTASK initiative quite a few years ago, also recognizing the need to involve members of the external societal community, not just technical experts.

Our philosophy in terms of dealing with the biotechnology challenge has to be to respect the diversity of views; to explore levels of comfort at which people can feel satisfied with certain types of biotechnology—clearly, nobody has any questions or difficulties with issues pertaining to molecular markers, or tissue culture, or the like; to respect issues of ethics, equity, and safety; to consult fully with all partners—NARS, NGOs, the private sector, and society at large; and, to act in a consistent partnership mode. Above all—and I carry this message most forcefully from all of our colleagues from the South—let us act.

The world is changing very rapidly, and that reminds me of the story of three people. Look at their different types. First, is the kind of person who makes things happen. Second, is the person who watches things happen. Third, is the person who asks, what happened? I hope we will be in the first category, that we will be among those who make things happen, and hopefully not those who watch things happen. And I sincerely hope we will never be among those who wonder after a while, what happened?

This is a spirit that we have all embraced together, and it has been part of our journey of renewal and of transformation. As I told you a number of times before, this is a journey that is never over, for renewal is never finished, our tasks always have to be done again and again, because the world we live in is a world of change, and the battles fought have to be fought all over again every day, every year. Renewal is not an event, it is a ceaseless process.

In that sense we revisited some of the things that we had decided and did not quite wrap up, including our commitment to pursue a program in Central Asia and the former Soviet Union. We believe that the CGIAR should be flexible in abiding by the spirit of Lucerne in this matter, and we will look at the potential programs that centers could bring to us.

Despite the achievements of the past, new challenges press on us, demanding that we act. So let us dare to be bold, and let us recommit ourselves to fully achieve the vision that is implicit in the mandate we received in Lucerne, to contribute through research to sustainable agriculture for food security in developing countries. This is not something that is lightly said or lightly taken, but it is something that I have a profound belief in, that the CGIAR is best positioned to handle. CGIAR members have kept the faith for over twenty-five years, often serving as beacons of hope among those for whom hope seemed out of reach. I recall, myself, during the days of my PhD, studying the dark books that predicted hunger and famine in India in the 1970s, Paul Ehrlich's book, *Famine 1975*, Gunnar Myrdal's deeply troubled *An Asian Drama*, and so on. Yet, all of the dire predictions did not come about.

We have now as big if not a bigger challenge ahead of us. We must, therefore, work at building a scientific enterprise, whose impact will be felt both today and tomorrow, guaranteeing a better future for the poor and access for those who do not have it, rather than an enterprise of science that brings more to the few.

The future beckons us. My friends, we have made a start on tackling it in these last few days. Let us dedicate ourselves, and let us move forward. I thank each and every one of you for your cooperation.

I have been delighted to welcome you in Egypt. I hope you have enjoyed the hospitality of my country, and I hope you will have a chance to see more of it, not just the insides of this room. I wish you, each and every one, safe journeys.

Thank you.