



Section I
Introduction



Introduction

The 1997 Mid-Term Meeting of the CGIAR recorded many firsts. It was the first CGIAR meeting in the WANA region, the first in Egypt, and the first at which the sitting CGIAR Chairman welcomed participants to his own home country. It was the first Mid-Term Meeting attended by close to 250 members and observers, and the first to set its sights on an annual budget of \$400 million in a distinctly foreseeable future.

The Government of Egypt threw its full weight behind the meeting. President Hosni Mubarak was scheduled to address MTM97, but could not do so because of unanticipated developments connected with a possible reopening of peace negotiations in the Middle East. Prime Minister Kamal El-Ganzoury left a critical budget meeting in Parliament to receive a CGIAR delegation for a roundtable discussion on agriculture. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture Youssuf Wally was a key speaker at the opening luncheon ceremony. Several Ministers and other officials attended CGIAR meetings including the opening of the ICLARM facility in Abassa. The enthusiasm of Egypt's National Organizing Committee and of ICARDA staff was unflagging.

The pull of history was undoubtedly part of the reason for the Group's great interest in the meeting site. Egypt was one of the world's earliest agrarian societies. The earliest evidence of cereal consumption, the first use of fermentation practices of biotechnology, and the very early development of durable water and soil conservation methods based on indigenous knowledge all come from Egypt. With that kind of historical record, how could Egypt fail to draw a "full house" of agricultural scientists?

The transition to the present—not only in Egypt, but throughout the WANA region—has retained past traditions and accumulated knowledge, and has created new challenges as well. From being a net exporter of food earlier this century, WANA is now the major food importing region in the developing world. The 1995 grain gap was 35 million metric tons and could reach 83 million metric tons by 2020, if the annual production growth rate

remains steady at a 2 percent per year. With a hypothetical average price of \$100 per metric ton, the region will need \$8.3 billion to close the grain gap, over twenty-five times the current annual budget of the CGIAR.

These challenges and the responses to them were captured in a video, crafted especially for screening at MTM97, and in two exhibits—one demonstrating how Egyptian agriculture is coping with the formidable tasks it confronts, the other showing how research at CGIAR centers supports the efforts of national agricultural scientists in the region. Regional and national challenges were part of the backdrop against which MTM97 looked to the future and for the most effective means of using yesterday's strengths as the foundation for tomorrow's achievements.

In keeping with the spirit of openness and of South-North solidarity that characterizes the renewed CGIAR, the eighteenth member from the South—Thailand—was admitted into the Group by acclamation in Cairo. Eleven Southern members, including Egypt, have joined the CGIAR during and after the renewal program of 1994 to 1995. In Bangkok, the Thai Government's decision to seek CGIAR membership was formally announced on the opening day of MTM97.

The changed composition of the Group, reflecting as it does an emphasis on partnerships, to a great extent conditions the positioning of the CGIAR within the global agricultural research system. "Positioning" was an important agenda item at MTM97, with discussions covering focus, roles, policies, norms, scientific tools, partnerships, tensions, organization, and efficiency. The Global Forum, which is an expression of what is now widely seen as the 4/96 partnership—4 percent of international agricultural research comprises the work of the CGIAR, 96 percent that of others—is an important linkage mechanism, and key decisions were taken on how it would function in the future.

Research directions for 1998 to 2000 were determined through the medium-term plans of the six-

teen CGIAR centers endorsed at MTM97. The continued orientation of CGIAR research toward poverty alleviation was reconfirmed. The advantages of biotechnology in these efforts were assessed and the foundation laid for a carefully considered expansion of biotechnology research as an important component of future effectiveness. Two specialist panels will study biotechnology issues in general and the implications of intellectual property rights issues for the CGIAR.

Scientific excellence was reemphasized, both in the review of the work program of the Impact and Assessment and Evaluation Group and in the consideration of the external reviews of three centers—ICRISAT, ISNAR, and IPGRI. The IAEG was formed in response to suggestions at the Lucerne Ministerial-Level Meeting (February 1995) that an independent group of experts should periodically assess the impact in real life of the results of work supported by CGIAR members. The need for developing a strong evaluation culture within the system was reaffirmed at MTM97 and,

as part of this process, the IAEG was urged to begin publishing an annual impact evaluation report—this will be yet one more first for the CGIAR.

The third review of the CGIAR system was launched in Cairo. The system review will be conducted by a distinguished panel, chaired by Mr. Maurice F. Strong. The panel will conduct its examination with a broad, forward looking perspective, focusing in particular on the future role of the CGIAR within rapidly changing global circumstances. The review will pay particular attention to the evolving relationships between the CGIAR and a wide range of partners.

Over and above the main thrusts of the meeting was the spirit in which ideas were exchanged and binding decisions were reached. Discussion on and off the floor sometimes bordered on the febrile. The ensuing decisions, therefore, had the advantage of being reached in a completely open fashion, with the overriding purpose of ensuring that the causes of the CGIAR are fully and competently served.





Statements by Members

Japan

Japan's head of delegation Kunio Nakamura presented the current view of the Government of Japan with regards to its cooperation with the CGIAR. Japan recognizes its responsibility as a member of the international community to address global issues such as poverty, the environment, and food security through its official development assistance program. In combating poverty, Japan attaches the utmost importance to the new development strategy adopted by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD in May 1996. This strategy stresses the need to address development in a new global manner—in a spirit of partnership rather than confrontation; the need for results oriented development targets—quantitative targets related, for example, to reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty, the mortality rates for infants and children, and maternal mortality rates; and, the ownership of development by developing countries. It also emphasizes the implementation of national strategies for sustainable development in all countries by 2005.

Japan has begun to implement the strategy in select countries, including a number of countries in Africa. One way of doing this is to channel bilateral cooperation through multilateral development institutions, such as the CGIAR. Therefore, Japan is interested in cooperating broadly with the CGIAR in the area of sustainable agricultural development.

Japan's ODA strategy attaches the highest importance to Africa, which is likely to continue to be the region with the most serious needs. As part of its effort, Japan is organizing the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development, to be held in 1998. It is expected that the conference will adopt an agenda for action in African development in the twenty-first century. It is crucial that donors, non-African countries, and multilateral development agencies clearly recognize their own roles and responsibilities, make political commitments to work for African development, and formulate and implement policies and programs to provide assistance. It is also an important prerequisite that African partners are engaged in self-help efforts. Japan places particular emphasis on South-South cooperation.

Japan has placed high priority on supporting the CGIAR's projects in Africa since last year, earmarking a significant part of its contribution to Africa. It is the intention of the Japanese Government to further strengthen its support for CGIAR efforts in Africa, including intraregional as well as interregional cooperation.

The Group received the statement of the representative of Japan with acclamation.

United States of America

US representative The Honorable Sally Shelton-Colby, Assistant Administrator for Global Programs, Field Support, and Research at USAID, paid tribute to the commitment of the Government of Egypt to agriculture, as reflected in the remarkable successes in the country's agricultural sector, and noted the close partnership between Egypt and the United States over the past twenty years.

She conveyed her pleasure that the US Government had been able to modestly increase its support to the CGIAR, and attributed this in large measure to the renewal of the CGIAR, among other factors. The priority accorded to food security by the current US Secretary of State, as the number one issue that American diplomats will be dealing with, was seen as a sign of the political commitment in the US Government to continuing support for the agricultural research programs of the CGIAR.

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The US Government is pleased by the CGIAR's expanding partnerships with NARS, regional organizations, and the Global Forum; its gradual movement toward greater quantification in relation to impact assessment; the opening of the CGIAR to private sector partnerships; the blossoming of NGO partnerships; and the system review. NGOs can contribute in a number of important areas, particularly in rehabilitation. The system review will help the CGIAR to look ahead, discern its comparative, competitive, and collaborative advantages, define and support its most important activities, long-term strategic research and the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources, and catalyze the engagement of its partners. The system review was urged to look closely at the CGIAR's cooperation with its partners in Central/Eastern Europe and in the Newly Independent States, particularly Russia. There is a great challenge to bring agricultural production in Russia back on stream. It is time that the CGIAR explore both how it can give to and benefit from Russia and other countries in the region being part of the CGIAR system.

Ms. Shelton-Colby emphasized the need for more flexibility in funding, and indicated this was an issue of concern to the US Government. The importance of providing unrestricted funding to the centers was noted.

All members of the Group were urged to support the CGIAR Chairman's efforts to encourage partners around the world to join the CGIAR, as there are a number of other countries who would benefit from membership, and the CGIAR system would benefit from their participation as well.

The Group received the statement of the representatives of the United States with acclamation.

Canada

Canadian representative Iain MacGillivray drew the Group's attention to the difficulty, under current conditions, of attaining the greater levels of financial support that will be required for the CGIAR to play an expanded role in shaping the world's agricultural future and the transition to a sustainable food supply. Canada understands why the centers seek additional resources in their medium-term plans for 1998-2000, given the enormous challenges of food insecurity, poverty, and natural resources degradation.

In Canada, vigorous efforts are made to bring the agricultural, food, and nutritional problems of developing countries back onto center stage. However, it is a formidable struggle. Centers can help by strengthening the milestones to change and by demonstrating how their programs and activities impact on development goals, including poverty alleviation and natural resources conservation. Case studies would be extremely helpful, and, in some cases, ex ante targets would be compelling.

The CGIAR must keep its focus on the long-term nature of its research and the continuing need to ensure funding for centers that has as few restrictions placed on it as possible. As well, cosponsors can play an important role in encouraging developing countries to strengthen sustained support to NARS.

IFAD

Mr. Abbas Kesseba, who was for many years IFAD's head of delegation and who currently serves IFAD as Director of Africa I Division, emphasized the need for intensified efforts by all partners in Africa to overcome the poor prospects of increasing food production on the continent. These efforts cannot be done by a single partner; they must be done through a collective partnership. IFAD will support the Global Forum so that it truly becomes an effective mechanism through which developing countries, NARS, NGOs, the private sector, and universities can join together with the CGIAR centers in shaping the future of agriculture.



Farewell to Anton J. Reithinger

At MTM97, the CGIAR said farewell to Mr. Anton J. Reithinger, who was retiring as the representative of the European Commission to the CGIAR. Special tribute was paid by the Chairman and by members to Mr. Reithinger for his many contributions to the CGIAR.

NGO Committee member Bernd Dreesmann expressed the gratitude of the NGO community to Mr. Reithinger for his service. He was noted for being an outstanding administrator, always working in the spirit of international cooperation and especially European integration, a very reliable donor, and a good friend.

The CGIAR Chairman expressed his appreciation for Mr. Reithinger being a staunch ally of the CGIAR in the European Commission, and a guide and a friend in the CGIAR's dealings with the intricacies of relationships in the European Commission. During his service, there has been a significant and steady increase in the support of the European Commission to the CGIAR. His organization of the Chairman's two visits to the European Union enabled the CGIAR to reach out to a greater group among the European Community, and to consolidate support for the CGIAR.

The Group gave a warm vote of thanks to a true friend, a reliable colleague, and a person of sage and wise counsel, not just for the CGIAR, but for the poor and deprived and the environment.

Mr. Reithinger expressed his thanks for the warm tribute, indicating that he was moved and felt that he will be leaving a circle of friends. He said dealing with the CGIAR "was one of the most enriching and most interesting periods of my professional life." What attracted him to the CGIAR was the immense practical contribution of the CGIAR's unique network of scientists to global development and food security, and the enormous potential the CGIAR offers for the resolution of the most urgent and important problems of development and of development policy.

