

Report from Parallel Session I

Discussion of the Second External Review of IFPRI

CGIAR Mid-Term Meeting - May 28, 1998

Chair: Ruth Haug

Secretary: Ravi Tadvalkar

Process

The Session chaired by Haug (Norway), was attended by over 40 participants. The Chair of the Review, Samuel Paul of India was not able to travel to Brazil and made a video presentation of the panel's findings and recommendations. IFPRI's Board Chair Martin Pinero and Director-General Per Pinsturp-Andersen responded to the review. TAC's observations were summarized by Don Winkelmann, TAC Chair after which the floor was opened for discussion.

Main Recommendations of the Panel

The panel has made four recommendations covering IFPRI's research work (stressing water and globalization), its outreach activities, impact assessment and relevance of IFPRI's activities. The panel also encouraged IFPRI's board to play a more active role in ensuring and monitoring the relevance and impact of the Institute's work.

Discussion

IFPRI's achievements

The Panel's positive assessment of IFPRI's contributions to food policy research were reaffirmed by TAC and strongly endorsed by the participants. In addition to the significant contribution to the Vision 2020 project to improving the awareness of policy makers on agricultural issues, speakers noted the extra-ordinary value of the Vision 2020 project in their agencies and organizations in responding to their decisionmakers. Some speakers felt that the panel's observations on the need to strengthen IFPRI's outreach work were not fully justified in view of the IFPRI's success in their own constituencies and IFPRI's active participation in policy debates. TAC Chair clarified that the observations were aimed at strengthening IFPRI's institutional capacity for outreach.

Importance of policy research within the CGIAR:

All participants fully endorsed the key role of policy research in CGIAR and its critical contribution to ensuring sustainable development. The review panel, TAC and the participants highlight the following issues to which IFPRI could make important contributions:

- Use, availability and management of Water Globalization/open economies
- Agrarian institutions for the rural poor New approaches to rural development Intellectual property rights
- Monitoring of food security and follow up of the World Food Summit
- Trade, impact of WTO on agriculture and poverty
- Impact assessment of policy research including methodology development New approaches to rural development
- Low income transition economies
- Participatory policy research

In its response to the panel report IFPRI highlighted its plans to update its current medium term plans through a series of consultations with its stakeholders to identify future priorities and work programs.

It was noted that while there were many suggestions for adding to IFPRI's portfolio there were very few suggestions about possible deletions. Consequently, to undertake these topics and to continue to work on its existing rich portfolio, IFPRI's resources would have to be considerably increased.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The participants strongly endorsed the panel's assessment that IFPRI had made remarkable progress in establishing itself as a premier research institution. It was noted that the management and board had already taken steps to implement most recommendations. The participants recommend that CGIAR adopt the report and continue its support to IFPRI.