

CGIAR

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Mid-Term Meeting 1999 May 24 - 28 Beijing, China

<h3>The Third System Review: From Proposals to Practice</h3>
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Report of the CDC

Attached is the report of the Center Directors' Committee as reported by its Chair, Pedro Sanchez.

Center Directors' Committee Report to MTM99
Beijing, China
May 28, 1999

CDC work: A very active period since ICW98

- The CDC has responded to the challenge of the Consultative Council to develop innovative science proposals. This involvement reinforces that the Centres are now truly accepted as full partners, and are listened to. The CDC looks forward to continuing to contribute actively in the deliberations of the Group.
- Intensive interactions -- both at meetings (post-ICW98 in Washington, The Hague, Rome, Nairobi, and Beijing) and by e-mail -- among the DGs resulted in the delivery of seven statements in response to the System Review's recommendations. These were presented to the Group at MTM99, some after review by TAC. It is also a reflection of the CDC's true intention to work more as a team -- within the CGIAR.
- The reports on Policy and Management Sciences, Gender, Global Information Systems, and Capacity Building came to closure at this MTM.
- The reports on Integrated Natural Resource Management and Integrated Gene Management signify major progress, which will come to closure at ICW99. Pending issues on INRM will be resolved at a workshop in Wageningen on September 3-5, 1999, and issues related to intellectual property rights within INRM will be finalized at ICW99, although we see these as continually evolving issues.
- The Committee on Sub-Saharan Africa convened a highly successful "Meeting of Minds" in Nairobi, May 10-12, which resulted for the first time in the development of a shared vision between African research leaders and Centre representatives on the role of the CGIAR in Africa. This was followed by a lively stakeholder consultation here in Beijing, which lent further impetus to the consultative process with African organizations to develop a mutually acceptable strategy for the CGIAR in Sub-Saharan Africa. Intensive consultations will take place during the next three months. "Meeting of Minds II" will be held in Africa during the week of August 30-September 3 to finalize the strategy and present it to TAC later in that month, and to ICW99 for final approval.
- PARC is a vibrant and dynamic committee led by the CDC, but highly representative of the CGIAR through its membership. Future Harvest, a product of PARC, has made significant progress. Its study on Agriculture and Conflict has been well received both within and outside the CGIAR community, beginning to erode the perception that the CGIAR is a best kept secret in the international community. A PARC commissioned paper on Resource Mobilization has been regarded as a valuable input to the Finance Committee for the development of a future funding strategy. This paper responds to the need for a single integrated capability for public awareness and resource mobilization as suggested by the System Review.
- The Committee on Information has made good progress in launching a program to facilitate NARS access to databases and other sources of information relevant to researchers.

Issues to the Group

- The CDC notes the on-going re-negotiation of the International Undertaking by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Given the important implications of this for the Centres, the CDC plans to strengthen its contribution to the negotiation process to help ensure that the CGIAR's mission is taken fully into account. In the mean time the Centres remain committed to continuing to make the germplasm available without restriction, and the CDC has issued a statement to this effect, jointly with the CBC.
- The CDC strongly endorses systemwide, or better said multi-center activities and endorses the preliminary analysis of the CBC presented at the meeting by Wally Falcon. The CDC feels that the unfunded portion of these activities within the agreed agenda should be filled first, before consideration is given to new multi-center initiatives as suggested by TAC. The CDC wishes to reiterate that there are always new initiatives in Centres' annual rolling MTPs and these should be the focus for any additional resourcing that is available.
- Out of the World Bank funds still available to the Finance Committee for 1999, the CDC feels that the equivalent of 1% of the aggregate budget (or about \$3.5 million) should be kept in reserve. It suggests that the balance, including the \$4.5 million earmarked for TAC initiatives, be distributed proportionally as unrestricted funds to the Centres, thus increasing the percentage of World Bank matching funds.
- The CDC is concerned about the diminished attention given to two main processes in the CGIAR system, i.e., the Medium-Term Plans (MTPs) and the quinquennial External Program and Management Reviews (EPMRs). Neither of these critical areas appears to attract sufficient attention from the membership with such crowded meeting agenda these days. This, potentially, weakens the ownership of the Centres by the Group. The CDC is looking forward to participating in the TAC/IAEG working group on this and related assessment issues, to assure the proper delivery of these key products or propose new ones.
- The CDC calls on the membership to minimize restrictions on their funding. The current trend towards a higher ratio of restricted funding is alarming for the Centres.
- The CDC strongly supports the call from the CGIAR Chair and the Finance Committee to the Group to have a clear systemwide policy on indirect cost recovery of restricted funds within the agreed agenda, a policy agreed by all members.

Farewell

The CDC would like to acknowledge the contributions of two departing members, not only as Directors General of their respective Centres, but also as highly valuable members of the CDC. Grant Scobie and Shawki Barghouti will remain good friends of the CGIAR and we are sure they will spread the good word in the respective organizations they will be joining in the near future.