

**MTM99 Parallel Session I: External Review of ICLARM**  
27 May 1999

**Chair:** Emmy Simmons  
**Rapporteur:** Joseph Mukiibi  
**Secretary:** Guido Gryseels/ Manuel Lantin

**Purpose**

The External Review report of ICLARM was considered in parallel session I on Thursday May 27 by an Ad-hoc Committee of interested CGIAR Members and other participants of MTM 99. The Committee's report is submitted for information and discussion to the CGIAR.

**Process**

Participants had received the Report of the Second External Program and Management Review of ICLARM, as well as the response of the Center to the review report, the TAC commentary, and the transmittal letter forwarding the report to the CGIAR Chair, in advance of the meeting.

The meeting of the Ad-hoc Committee was attended by over 35 participants, and the session was lively. The discussion of the review report followed an introduction of the review report by Hans Gregersen, panel chair, the response of the Center by Kurt Peters, Chair of the Board and Meryl Williams, Director General of ICLARM, and the TAC Commentary by Elias Fereres, TAC member. The Review Panel Chair, Center representatives, and the member of TAC responded to questions. At the end of the session, the Session Chair summarized the discussion and the recommendations of the parallel session.

**Comments and Issues**

1. The ad hoc committee concurred with the overall conclusion of the Panel and of TAC that the review had resulted in a very positive assessment of ICLARM, and that the Center had made remarkable progress in all aspects of its work since it was admitted in the CGIAR in 1992, and in particular since the mid-term review of 1995. The report is very supportive of the Centers research and management, and contains in addition to a set of recommendations, many useful suggestions which are being followed up by Board and Management of ICLARM. The ad hoc committee very much appreciated the excellent preparations of ICLARM for the review, and the open and frank attitude it had taken with the panel.

2. Questions were raised regarding ICLARM's strategy in Africa, the innovative nature of its partnerships, the importance of socio economic aspects in fisheries research, and the crucial role of fisheries for food security. After clarification by the DG of the elements of ICLARM's strategy in Africa which is composed of several thrusts, there was consensus that the Center was proceeding on the right track. The importance of a comprehensive approach to the introduction of technology, including entrepreneurship, to ensure equity of benefits, was stressed. Appreciation was expressed for ICLARM's community based research particularly in the South Pacific, and the future potential for polyculture of reef organisms was discussed with respect to the potential of the latter for generating income streams. ICLARM was encouraged to ensure that its involvement with networks and databases, which was highly appreciated, remained closely related to its research programme. ICLARM's capacity for continuing its involvement in maintaining databases

in the long term was also discussed. ICLARM's work in social science research was supported, particularly given the importance of socio economic variables and the attention given to impact assessment research.

3. Satisfaction was expressed about recent evidence from FAO that showed that the fisheries sector in developing countries was even far more important than considered until recently. It was pointed out, however, that the FAO estimate only included the value of fish as a commodity, and not for its contributions to resource management and to the environment. It was expected that TAC would be using the new FAO estimates in the analytical work that supports its work on CGIAR Priorities and Strategies.

4. Comments were made about ICLARM's contributions to research on biodiversity, the potential pay off from genetics research, and its links to the private sector. Appreciation was expressed for ICLARM's strong institutional links with a broad range of partners.

5. The Ad-hoc Committee considered the proposed move of ICLARM's Headquarters to Malaysia which was strongly supported. Appreciation was expressed for ICLARM's cautious but well planned approach, and for its policy of using existing facilities to the extent possible. The potentially disruptive aspects of the move were discussed also, but the ad hoc committee was assured that ICLARM's Board and Management was well prepared to handle them. The ad hoc committee supported ICLARM's plans to maintain a set of research activities in the Philippines and continue its close collaboration with relevant national agencies in the country. Gratitude was expressed to the Government of the Philippines for its continued support.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The Ad-hoc Committee:

- **Strongly endorsed** the Panel's recommendations and positive assessment of ICLARM, and thanked the panel for an excellent report, and ICLARM for its attitude and excellent preparations for the review.
- **Was very pleased** with the progress made by ICLARM since the mid term review.
- **Encouraged** members to continue to support ICLARM's work.
- **Endorsed** the proposed move of ICLARM's Headquarters to Malaysia and encouraged Members to provide the necessary support and assistance to minimize disruptions to ICLARM's research programs.
- **Calls** the attention of the Group to the importance of the fisheries sector for food security and the environment, which will further increase in the next century.
- **Assures** the Group that ICLARM is well placed to meet the challenges to international fisheries research.