

Dear Colleagues,

Last week the Executive Council met at CIAT in Cali, Colombia, to assess progress in implementing the reforms agreed to by the CGIAR Members at the Annual General Meeting in Maputo last December. I'm pleased to report that ExCo expressed support for the work to date in broad terms and provided a "green light" to continue with the transition process. At the same time, the Members flagged several issues that will require more analysis and discussion to resolve.

ExCo's Assessment of Progress to Date

Discussions at ExCo largely centered on progress to date in establishing the Consortium, the Strategy and Results Framework and Mega Programs, the Fund and the accountability framework, and preparations for the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD).

The progress report on the **Consortium constitution** clearly demonstrated the Centers growing commitment to the new Consortium as a means to achieve great development results. There is a growing sense of the possibilities this offers and genuine excitement about what the Centers can achieve together through this new way of working. ExCo welcomed signals that the Consortium Board and CEO will have the authority and tools they need to effectively lead the Consortium. This is a critical component. However, more work is needed to clarify roles and relationships in this regard. The Center Boards are urged to undertake due diligence on the legal implications of the Consortium soon. An advisory group of ExCo Members will provide input into the further development of the constitution.

The update on the process for developing the **Strategy and Results Framework and Mega Programs** also demonstrated the Centers' growing enthusiasm about the reform process leading to a cohesive results-oriented research program. ExCo confirmed that this process is moving in the right direction, but urged greater involvement of partners and beneficiaries in the upcoming consultations on the further development of the Strategy and Results Framework and Mega Programs. ExCo also emphasized the need to go beyond repackaging of existing research programs and maintain a truly open and creative process in developing the Mega Programs.

Regarding the new **Fund**, ExCo confirmed that we are on track with some remaining issues to be worked out around the composition of the Fund Council and Funders Forum, the role of the Independent Science and Partnerships Council and what the donor agreements with the Fund and performance contracts will look like. Scenarios and mock ups to respond to these questions will be developed and further consultations will be held with donors in the next few months to finalize issues on fund design and firm up donor commitments.

The **Accountability** framework is developing in the right direction. We are striving to identify the minimum set of tools that will combine clear accountability at both the program and systemwide levels with managerial simplicity. ExCo requested that the framework be expanded in several areas to provide clear accountability mapping and tools for enforcement. For example, they requested that accountability to beneficiaries be added, as well as a means for conflict resolution. The next step for the framework will be to further develop it to ensure coherent accountability across all the elements of the new CGIAR system.

The plans for the **GCARD** and the consultative process leading up to it demonstrated clear progress by the Global Forum on Agriculture (GFAR) in charting out this exciting and ambitious bottom-up approach to link agriculture research agenda setting with the needs of beneficiaries. The stakeholder consultations leading up to the GCARD in March 2010 are designed to be as participatory as possible, engaging regional and national research organizations, farmer organizations and CSOs through electronic and

face-to-face regional consultations beginning in August. ExCo requested more detail on the outputs from each step of the consultations and how they will build on each other, called for greater engagement with

the private sector and emphasized the need for visible interface between the GCARD consultations and those for the Strategy and Results Framework and Mega Programs.

Next Steps

With the important milestone of ExCo reached, the Transition Management Team is now working hard to take us into the next phase of the transition. The feedback received will be incorporated into the next steps for implementation. ExCo agreed to meet again in early November and this will be our next major landmark on the path to the December Business Meeting.

I'd like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all involved in getting us to where we are today. Our momentum is building as we develop a clearer vision of what we will be able to achieve through our new, more cohesive way of working together. The coming months will likely be even more demanding and very active with broad-reaching consultations on the Strategy and Results Framework and the GCARD. However, leaving ExCo I am confident that the spirit of working together as a System is growing stronger and that we are determined to succeed in delivering on our commitments. Together, we will build a CGIAR that delivers agricultural research with greater development impact on the ground.

CIAT Town Hall Dialogue on the Change Initiative

I'd also like to recognize what a pleasure it was to hold ExCo at CIAT where we were able to see firsthand the enthusiasm among staff thanks to the arrival of the new Director General Ruben Echeverria and the new strategic directions charted under the leadership of outgoing Director General Geoff Hawtin. My TMT colleagues and I engaged in a Town Hall style dialogue with CIAT staff on the changes underway and the event proved to be a lively exchange in a full auditorium with staff asking diverse questions related to the development of Mega Programs, fund allocation in the new system, what the new CGIAR will deliver beyond what we do today, and what scientists should be doing during the change process. For more details on the dialogue I'd like to encourage you to read [a blog post from CIAT staff](http://ciatlibrary.blogspot.com/2009/06/this-is-your-change-so-get-involved.html) (<http://ciatlibrary.blogspot.com/2009/06/this-is-your-change-so-get-involved.html>) or view the [video of the event](http://snapst.ciat.cgiar.org/liveboard.htm) (<http://snapst.ciat.cgiar.org/liveboard.htm>).

Sincerely,

Katherine Sierra
For the Transition Management Team