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Second External Programme and Management Review of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

Dear Drs Pinstруп-Andersen and Reifschneider,

I am pleased to transmit to you, on behalf of the Panel, the Report of the Second External Programme and Management Review (EPMR) of the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), headquartered in Indonesia. The Panel reviewed, as requested in our Terms of Reference, CIFOR's research programme, outputs and impacts, as well as its management and governance. The Panel also considered the CGIAR guidelines for all EPMRs and the eight specific strategic issues you instructed it to examine in the case of CIFOR.

The Panel reviewed hundreds of CIFOR, SC and CGIAR documents and reports, examined the Center's personnel, financial and physical resources, and had meetings with a large number of the Center's staff and members of the Board of Trustees individually and collectively. Members of the Panel also visited CIFOR Regional Offices and activities in Latin America and Central Africa. In addition, the Panel met with and made surveys of, and interviews with, stakeholders, donors and Director Generals of the other CGIAR Centers.

Overall the Panel finds that CIFOR is the leading international forest research center within its mandate and that it is highly appreciated for its credible and relevant high-quality research. The Panel also considers CIFOR to be a lead CGIAR Center in terms of communication strategies and effective outreach activities.

The need for effective and influential research and communication about sustainable management of forest and other natural resources with a strong pro-poor approach is beyond measure. Hundreds of millions of poor people rely on forests for their survival. Forests yield everything from food and medicinal plants to fiber and building materials; protection and enhancement of environmental services (soils and water resources, biodiversity, climate and carbon cycles); as well as employment and other socio-economic benefits. There is therefore a great need for an international forest research

institute such as CIFOR to conduct high quality research with its main aim to impact on international, regional and national forest policies to achieve poverty alleviation.

In the eight years since the last EPMR the Center has, in the view of the Panel, made significant progress in making poverty alleviation a central focus in its Programmes. However, since it is 10 years since the last CIFOR strategy was adopted, the Panel strongly recommends that, after the new Director General is in place, a revised CIFOR strategy be developed through a consultative and participatory process that builds on its current strengths and brings staff and management together with key stakeholders to agree on a shared vision, mission, values and strategic goals.

From its inception CIFOR focused on policy issues to enable more 'informed, productive, sustainable and equitable decisions about the management and use of forests'. CIFOR's research has contributed to the development of key international agreements, policies and practices related to forests at global, regional, national, and local levels. This policy focus demands strategies, research activities, partners, and measures of success that are different than those of many other CGIAR Centers that are primarily concerned with on-farm research for improving livestock and crop production. Given the nature and long-term focus of its research, the ways in which its results are likely to find application if successful, the complex interactions between forest and people, the multitude of organizations and agencies involved, and the dynamic and political nature of international forestry it is especially difficult for CIFOR to measure impact directly. Given that fact, the Panel has recommended that CIFOR needs to give even greater attention in its project and strategic planning to clearly identifying and assessing its impact pathways and to making as sure as possible that they are likely to meet the CGIAR's poverty objectives and CIFOR's own objectives.

CIFOR provided outstanding resources for the Panel including documentation, administrative help and time for discussion with any staff member whenever the Panel wished. The official and personal help, hospitality and openness of the Board, the Director General and all of Center staff was remarkable and the Panel members wish to express their sincere thanks for this support.

I wish to thank my fellow Panel members who worked together in a common cause with great enthusiasm, commitment and sense of purpose and humility, and forgave me when I was too demanding. It was a pleasure to work with them. I also wish to thank, on behalf of the Panel, Sirkka Immonen from the SC Secretariat who served as a resource person and supported the Panel throughout the review, and Manny Lantin from the CGIAR Secretariat who helped from a distance and provided valuable input the governance and management components of the review.

Finally all the Panel Members join me in expressing our appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the challenging task of conducting this Review. We do hope our report will be useful to the CGIAR and the SC, and first and foremost to CIFOR and its partners, donors, stakeholders, and mission.

Yours Sincerely,



Niels Elers Koch
Chair, External Programme and Management Review Panel