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1 March 2006

External Programme and Management Review of the World Agroforestry Centre

Dear Drs Pinstrup-Anderson and Reifschneider

It is a privilege and pleasure to submit to you, on behalf of the EPMR Panel, the Report of the Third External Programme and Management Review of the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). The Panel took note of the CGIAR guidelines for all EPMRs and of the specific points you instructed it to examine in the case of ICRAF. In addition it read nearly two hundred ICRAF documents and reports, examined the Centre's physical, financial, personnel and intellectual property resources, and had meetings with a large number of the Centre's staff individually and collectively. Members of the Panel also visited several field offices and activities of the Centre.

The Panel recognized that agroforestry is a complex subject involving many biophysical and socioeconomic sciences with the problems of the many interfaces between them. This complexity is reflected in the Centre's strategic planning, staffing and financing and, consequently, these affect the difficulty of its governance and management. The Panel also felt that the Centre is under extreme pressure from the existence of the large array of global, regional and national institutions whose own policies and strategic targets affect those of ICRAF and necessitate considerable efforts by ICRAF's staff that should better be spent on research. We strongly endorse the need for ICRAF to focus on strategic research that advances agroforestry technologies as a means of improving food security and environmental conditions of the rural poor.

A major issue is the balance of unrestricted and restricted funding for the Centre. The proportion of unrestricted funds is now very low forcing the Centre to seek restricted funding from donors

whose policies often do not match those of ICRAF's own desirable strategic plan. At the same time, these restricted funds often do not bring appropriate overheads, thus placing additional burdens on the limited restricted funds. Together these make it difficult for the Centre to develop a real strategic plan (as opposed to forcing its researches into the requirements of donors).

In the seven years since the last EPMR the Centre has, in the view of the Panel, reduced its strategic research, and certainly reduced its pathbreaking research that might produce International Public Goods, with an increase in development work to the extent that it appears to have substituted for national extension and development services in some cases. The Panel's report includes the statement that the Centre is now at a stage where it must decide whether to remain a CGIAR research institute (ICRAF) or become a development Non-Governmental Organization (World Agroforestry Centre).

The Panel felt that ICRAF has attempted to maintain its reputation by sheer numbers – e.g. country offices, regions, focal points in themes, partners – and consequently lost focus, direction and scientific reputation. The Centre does not have to undertake every research and development activity itself in order to see its vision achieved in the long term. Similarly it does not have to work in every country or region to develop IPGs.

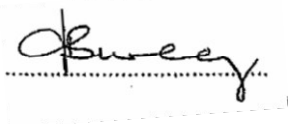
The Panel devoted a great deal of time to questions of governance and management; the report includes a number of recommendations and suggestions for improving these because there is no doubt in the Panel's mind that the current situation in some units is extremely poor, especially in personnel matters, and may threaten the reputation and continued existence of the Centre.

ICRAF provided outstanding resources for the Panel including documentation, office space, IT support, administrative help and time for discussion with any staff member the Panel wished. The personal and official help and hospitality of the Director General and all staff was remarkable and the Panel members wish to express their thanks for all of this support. The Panel and the Centre staff quickly agreed that the object of the EPMR was to help improve the operation of the Centre and to reassure the funding agencies that their investments were worthwhile.

The Panel members, including the Financial Consultant, join me in thanking our outstanding Panel Secretary, Dr Ruben Echeverría, for his continued support and guidance, and his staff in Rome for their administrative help throughout.

The Panel thanks the CGIAR and SC for giving them the opportunity to participate in this review and hope that it will be useful to the Centre and its donors and partners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffery Burley', written over a horizontal dotted line. The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Professor Jeffery Burley
Chair
External Programme and Management Review
ICRAF