

## **ExCo Members' Corrections/Comments on Draft Sub-Saharan Africa Task Force Report**

The SSA Task Forces requested comments on a near-final draft report from selected stakeholder groups, including ExCo, in late March 2005. The TFs invited comments before finalizing the report for submission to ExCo and the CGIAR, "particularly as they relate to factual errors and errors of judgment presented in the report." Since the TFs requested a consolidated response from each stakeholder group, ExCo members' comments were consolidated by the CGIAR Secretariat and forwarded to the TF co-chairs. The consolidated response follows:

### **ExCo Comments on SSA/TF Near-Final Draft Report**

In response to your request for comments on the near-final draft of the SSA TFs report from ExCo, there were only a few responses from ExCo members, probably in view of the fact that they will soon be discussing the final version at the ExCo meeting in Berlin. We may get a few additional comments from ExCo members but since you indicated you need these immediately, we consolidated below comments received so far. Those who responded expressed general support for the near-final draft report and made no significant comments on factual errors/errors of judgment. The key comments and questions centered on the following:

- General support was expressed for consolidation into ESA and WCA, with the observation that this could serve as a model to be replicated in other regions.
- It was observed that the report did not provide sufficient explanation for recommending two different governance models for ESA and WCA. Also, a question was raised on how the existing CGIAR infrastructure in SSA would be managed within the framework the proposed restructuring.
- What is the estimated cost of the proposed restructuring? How will the restructuring affect impact and add value?
- The proposal for only two MTPs for SSA is welcomed; the target date of calendar year 2006 may be a bit optimistic but should be strived for.
- The report does not address the issue of the CGIAR undertaking a concerted effort to provide African governments with assistance in agricultural research institution strengthening/capacity building to effectively address their agricultural research challenges.
- A suggestion to explore a program structure most suited to the research needs of SSA and the corresponding organizational model(s) most appropriate to that structure.

Members noted that they would offer more in-depth comments at the upcoming ExCo meeting in May.

The individual comments received from ExCo members are as follows:

#### **Comment 1:**

A few comments on the recommendations made in the report:

1. My first concern is about cost. Do we have any idea about the cost of the proposed restructuring of the System's operations? If not, may be this issue should be dealt with later on.
2. CGIAR's infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa is very impressive. How would the existing infrastructure be managed within the framework of the proposed restructuring?
3. The proposed organizational models for ESA and WCA are quite different. On what basis the two models were conceived? Why should ESA and WCA Global Centers be organized differently? More elaboration is needed in the report on this matter.
4. Paying a lot of attention to impact seems to me very important for this restructuring process. What are the indications that the proposed restructuring will have an impact and will add value?
5. Appropriation of the proposed restructuring is of paramount importance and will require that certain conditions be met. What strategies will be put forward to facilitate the appropriation of what is proposed in the report?

## **Comment 2:**

...the report marks a welcome and radical change in the way business is suggested to be made within the CGIAR. Especially useful is the adopted approach to go beyond Sub-Saharan Africa and deal with structural reform at the global level. Thus, in our view the report successfully addresses the necessary challenge on how to move towards global restructuring of the System's operations.

We will focus our comments mainly in relation to the recommendations in the report.

### **Recommendation 1.**

We fully support this recommendation of a long term objective to consolidate all CGIAR centers and activities into one global corporate entity. Implementing this recommendation will give far reaching consequences as regards host-country agreements, autonomies etc which will have to be dealt with great skill.

### **Recommendation 2.**

We welcome the proposal to consolidate IITA/WARDA into WCA and ILRI/ICRAF (+ ICRISAT-activities) into ESA. Here we would further encourage the implementation process to consider inclusion/increased collaboration with ICIPE as part of ESA-functions.

### **Recommendation 3**

We agree with the proposal that only two MTPs are developed for SSA. In developing these MTPs we further recommend that the WCA and ESA entities collaborate also with the newly

established AATF (African Agricultural Technology Foundation) for facilitated access to proprietary materials and technologies especially in the agro-biotech area.

**Recommendation 4.**

The innovative approach suggested for SSA (see above) is proposed to be replicated in other regions. We support this recommendation in principle, but recommend that a stepwise strategy is adopted to learn from the SSA-process.

**Recommendation 5**

We fully support this recommendation. The target objective to have the two MTPs ready for the calendar year 2006 might be optimistic but should certainly be aimed for.

**Comment 3:**

...acknowledge receipt of the report and do not find striking factual errors in it.

Our initial reaction is to agree with its general thrust.

**Comment 4:**

**General Remarks**

We reiterate our remarks to the SSA Task Force chairs that the Future Harvest Centers, through their Alliance, are very open to bold propositions for organizational change, such as those contained in the Task Forces Report. The global context of the CGIAR work is changing rapidly and new models of working are required to address future needs. The report has masterfully analyzed the problems with CGIAR agricultural research activities in Sub-Saharan Africa, drawing on the impressions and facts from many sources, including especially those from the Centers and the Alliance.

In this response, we provide a preliminary, consolidated response to each of the recommendations, plus any formal responses already received from Centers' Boards. Of the latter, four have so far been received and several others will meet face-to-face over the next several weeks. The Alliance is not yet in a position to provide a final consolidated Centers' response as the CBC and Alliance Executive will not meet face to face until 4-6 May. We look forward to sharing our deliberations at ExCo. In addition, at the Center level, many Boards have yet to meet and/or finalize their out of session views.

***Recommendation 1: The TFs recommend that the CGIAR agree in principle, and put in place a process, to consolidate all CGIAR Centers and activities into one global corporate entity.***

The Alliance supports the spirit and principle behind the recommendation that the CGIAR agree on a process for consolidating the Centers' work globally, regionally and nationally as

appropriate. The Alliance notes that this concept has been voiced in the CGIAR several times, but rarely has its meaning been developed to the stage of explaining how it would address the future needs or vision of the CGIAR. The concept still requires bold leadership that can gain support and credibility for the change by developing a strong conceptual framework to support it. The lack of conceptual basis is of concern to some, but not all, members of the Alliance peak bodies.

The Alliance itself has identified the need for greater centralization and coordination at different scales and the work of the Alliance is now directed to this end. As the CBC/CDC statement to the AGM04 indicated, the creation of the Alliance builds on:

- The Centers' extensive existing well performing collaborations in programs, administration and policies.
- An analysis of deficiencies which have characterized collective action in the past with specific major Guiding Principles to address these past deficiencies
- Existing entities and mechanisms such as the Center Directors Committee, the Committee of Board Chairs, the Medium Term planning process and others.
- A determination of the Centers to improve and streamline programming efforts in SubSaharan Africa, in collaboration with the System Task Forces, as a first priority.

The Alliance was set up to govern *the collective* work of the independent Centers, establish mechanisms for conflict resolution and speak with a common voice to raise the visibility of the issues the Centers address collectively. From the outset, the Centers are involving others, such as regional and national partners, in framing collective actions in order to ensure that the action serves the people we are trying to reach.

The present Center Directors Committee has transformed itself to become the Alliance Executive, based on 10 agreed Guiding Principles designed to address past challenges and with greater decision making powers and accountability. The Board Chairs support this new and creative impetus and will act as a Board for the Alliance, with an initial focus on serving as a higher body on conflict resolution. At their May 2005 meetings, the Centers will consider an advanced draft of the Charter for the Alliance of Future Harvest Centers of the CGIAR.

In September 2004, the CGIAR Executive Committee welcomed both the foresight represented in organizing this work, and the important step forward that would be represented by its implementation. The Alliance will complete its establishment phase in 2005.

At this stage, the Alliance is not in a position to explicitly endorse or accept the proposal for one corporate entity, as the current proposal does not address certain priority matters such as the likely outcomes of similar reviews of the CGIAR in other regions, the need for a more detailed review of the option of a single corporate research entity within the CGIAR System, and options for other organizational models that may achieve the same objectives. These options will need to be examined in terms of transition costs (financial, research impact, relational, etc) and disruption risks. Likewise, the funding options for the transition to the alternative options need consideration, along with the likely implementation schedules.

Whereas the Alliance supports the position that the CGIAR program could deliver better performance in SSA, there is a real gap between the task that was set for the task forces and the recommendations that they have delivered. With their first guiding principle being that they would focus on the programmatic issues before structure, to then make global structural recommendations without any investigation of the global programmatic issues is a leap of logic.

The proposed programmatic alignment jumps to fixing “form” before the Task Forces have assessed what “function” would be best to meet the CGIAR’s goals in the region. The Alliance suggests that the central question for this analysis should be “what kind of a CGIAR structure would best serve the needs of the poor and food-insecure in Sub-Saharan Africa,” rather than what then what is currently proposed “what kind of a CGIAR structure would serve the CGIAR best”? Next, the Alliance would suggest the Task Forces determine how these goals would be achieved in the most efficient and effective way. The final step would be to analyze organizational forms that support the desired function.

The report does not offer an analysis of the relative transaction costs of a system that would emerge from a mega-merger of 15 Centers versus any alternatives, for example strengthening the emerging Alliance (which is open to mergers and additions), or the development of a set of 3 to 5 Center-clusters, etc.

By the time of the May ExCo meeting, the Alliance of Future Harvest Centers will have prepared additional information to assist in the proposed CGIAR process for considering and agreeing on various systemwide consolidation options.

***Recommendation 2: The TFs recommend that, as a first step towards global restructuring of the System’s operations, over the next 18 months the CGIAR consolidate the centers headquartered in SSA into two global entities: one in West and Central Africa (WCA), and the other in East and Southern Africa (ESA).***

The Alliance welcomes this recommendation as one prospective way to address the recognized need for the Centers to implement much greater coordination in their activities in the African regions. However, we believe that if this option were implemented without a solid analysis of the full set of best coordination models to solve the identified problems in SSA, it could contradict a more carefully thought through global solution to the CGIAR.

In addition, the Task Forces Report does not deliver a compelling case to support different models in different sub-regions nor the links of these sub-regional solutions to the global solution. Given that there will be considerable costs and time needed in forming the two sub-regional entities, and that these may have to be undone in the medium term, the proposed SSA solutions seem to offer greater costs and complications than necessary. If approved now, this step will plunge the SSA headquartered Centers into considerable uncertainty for much longer than those in any of the other regions.

The Alliance is working on other sub-regional and regional mechanisms to achieve the objectives of better coordination and coherence of the Centers' programs. One solution would

attempt to build upon the successful experience of the Challenge Programmes and ecoregional mechanisms, plus the insights of other collaborative research structures such as cooperative research centers, incorporated and unincorporated joint ventures. This option is to implement a Future Harvest regional program in ESA and a regional programme in WA. The concept is to create a governing board for each of these regional programmes that would appoint an independent regional director. The regional director would be given the authority to coordinate the development of the Centres' joint MTPs in the subregion, manage their implementation, monitor and evaluate their performance, and represent the Alliance to all relevant regional and international bodies. The regional directors would be expected to report regularly to the ExCo and the AGM, to the Alliance Executive and Alliance Board, and to FARA and the SROs. We may also envision that the regional directors may periodically report directly to the Boards of the Centers that are actively engaged in the sub-regions as well. These regional programs would of course need to receive adequate budgets to accomplish these responsibilities.

Such a mechanism would ensure that coordination and coherence among the centres, and between the centres and the SROs, is greatly enhanced. Thus it addresses the concerns and objectives of the Task Forces in this regard. However, this mechanism avoids the disruption attendant to a grand structural merger of all Center operations in the sub-regions and the attendant risks to the infrastructure and assets of the existing Centers. It will also avoid the disconnection of such regional initiatives from the main technology generating institutions of the System (the Alliance Centers). It will also assure that the institutional linkages (not just NARIs, but Universities, NGOs and the private sector) in the region are not lost. This solution will not disconnect the functional links to technology sources (in particular germplasm utilization), and dry up the pipeline of new technologies that are needed to feed developmental needs of the near and intermediate future.

Another mechanism would be for the Alliance to encourage the establishment of an initiative in support of a single African Agricultural Research Center (that may be under AU-NEPAD guidance, but the design and organization would be a matter for African decision makers).

The Alliance Executive of DGs and the Alliance Board is currently studying and refining the models. These models can then be analyzed and examined by the CGIAR to enrich the portfolio of opportunities to achieve our common objectives to increase the effectiveness of the Future Harvest Centers in supporting a breakthrough in African agricultural development.

***Recommendation 3: The TFs recommend that the CGIAR plan and implement its research activities focused on SSA through two MTPs, one for WCA and the other for ESA.***

The Alliance strongly supports this approach. Indeed, the Alliance conceived this approach, announced it at AGM04 and its execution has already commenced. A joint MTP for Eastern and Central Africa is currently being developed in collaboration with ASARECA to be presented to the CGIAR in 2005. The same process is getting underway with CORAF for West Africa. A pilot project on country coordination is also being conducted in Kenya. The Alliance would appreciate further assistance in terms of funds and resources to accelerate the

development of the MTPs. Our early experience is that they are somewhat stretching the thin Center resources available to do this work, and even more so the scarce resources of the SROs and FARA.

The Alliance recognizes, however, that the SROs and FARA do not adequately represent the forestry, fisheries, animal health, water and policy research partners, and in some cases not at all. Guidance is needed on how to overcome this challenge. The report, however, did not address this challenge. This section of the Report could be made stronger, stressing the need for bringing to the table a number of stakeholders who are frequently absent from the SROs as they presently operate. Another important limitation is the institutional weakness of the SRO in southern Africa.

***Recommendation 4: The TFs recommend that the CGIAR commission other task forces to identify programmatic and structural alignment needs and opportunities in the remaining regions***

The Alliance strongly supports this recommendation and urges that the reviews are done immediately with the new (soon to be approved) CG priorities in mind and with consultation of the Centers.

***Recommendation 5: The TFs recommend that the CGIAR take the following actions for implementing the stepwise structural reform suggested in this report:***

- i. During the interim period until the formation of the above recommended SSA based global entities, request CDC/CBC to develop in partnership with the SROs and NARS sub-regional MTPs for SSA, starting with CY2006.***

The Alliance fully supports Recommendation 5(i) and notes that these are already underway (see above request for resources to accelerate). The Alliance notes that now that the SC-led CGIAR priorities and strategies exercise is nearing acceptance, this is an appropriate time to forge ahead. The recommendation asks for this to start in CY 2006. Given that the SC expects centers to submit MTPs by June 15 it will be impossible to get very far in this coordination for 2006. The SC will need to set a somewhat later date for submission of these sub-regional MTPs.

- ii. Request the SC to review the MTPs and submit commentaries to the ExCo which will perform oversight function on their implementation;***

The Alliance fully supports this Recommendation. In addition, the Alliance will establish, in 2005, new and empowered oversight institutions, such as a contractual and conflict resolution mechanisms with authorities for decisions and action, to ensure that the coordination and partnership building is adequately resourced and overseen. The governance mechanisms will involve a mix of independent and responsible persons appointed as representatives of the governance of the Centers and the partners (SROs, NARS, others as appropriate).

- iii. Request the Boards of IITA and WARDA to form a CGIAR global entity in West and Central Africa, starting with the establishment of a single Board;***

The Alliance finds merit in the single Board concept for WCA, but notes the merging of IITA and WARDA's Board will only be a partial step towards a global entity. Sub-regional solutions would have to consider the hosting of other Centers active in that region, or needed there, to fulfill the MDG achievement. This and other institutional options for WCA will be considered by the Alliance as part of the exercise described in the response to Recommendation 2 above.

***iv. Establish, in cooperation with ICRAF and ILRI Boards, a CGIAR global entity in East and Southern Africa, following a corporate model and with ILRI and ICRAF as its initial constituent units.***

In view of the unnecessary additional costs and transition time required for this step, and in the absence yet of a fully developed global model, the Alliance does not agree with establishing this interim organization. We propose that this model be further examined along with the model of establishing regional programs that was highlighted above (see response to Recommendation 2), and other models that might be suited to supporting the achievement of stronger regional coordination mechanisms. It should be deferred until after the other Regional Panels report to ensure consistency of approach. However, cost saving integration of functions of the two Centers are envisioned in the Alliance context.

***ILRI Board specific response to Rec. 5iv: The ILRI BOT met and discussed this recommendation. The ILRI Board recognizes the urgency of addressing the problems diagnosed in the report for the ESA region and the opportunity created by the international support for agricultural and S&T development of the region. Beyond addressing the global organizational issues ILRI BOT recognizes an urgent need to clearly identify the functions the CGIAR is expected to play in ESA in the coming years and based on such functional analysis, then design an appropriate organizational structure for the region. (Form following function). ILRI proposes the establishment of a small work group involving members of the SSA-TF, the most directly involved centers and a representation of the other centers to carry out this analysis and to design an appropriate organizational response. ILRI is fully committed to engage in this process and to actively implement its outcome***

**Additional Comments on Other Parts of the Text**

1. The section on 'new boards' is essentially sound and could also be applied to remake existing boards of Centers – and would likely lead to faster Center restructuring under an Alliance.
2. One estimate of the total costs of restructuring all Centers could be extrapolated from recent efforts, namely about \$5m per Center or \$75million. A considerably amount of diplomacy would be required at the country level and major efforts needed at the Center level to retain the best people and be fair to all concerned. Lessons learned from the WorldFish HQ move, the ILRI, IPGRI-INIBAP integration and the ISNAR-IFPRI merger should be consolidated and used. From 2-3 full years of Centers

productivity, spread over 5 years, would be lost. Extraordinary attention to implementation would be needed.

## **ATTACHMENTS: Center Boards' Approved Responses**

### **1. CIAT**

#### **Response from CIAT Board CGIAR Sub-Saharan Africa Task Forces**

##### **Overall Comments:**

The CIAT BOT was impressed with the quality of the report and the elegant assessment of the current situation in SSA. The background information clearly described this situation and reasons that it can not continue. The report highlights strengths and weaknesses of the CGIAR as well as some important contributions that have been made. The issues and concerns listed on pages 17-19 are real and must be dealt with.

The CIAT BOT is in overall agreement with the recommendations from the report except those related to structure. We agree that bold steps need to be taken to resolve the current, unacceptable situation. Greater programmatic alignment is necessary for the CGIAR to meet the needs in SSA. Previous studies made suggestions that were not followed through with and that were not replaced with alternatives that would solve the problems that still limit the effectiveness of the CGIAR. Structural changes may also be necessary as programmatic alignment is pursued; however, we believe that the best approach is to develop an integrated program in SSA, then change the structure as needed. Thus, we agree that changes are necessary and look forward to being part of the process that contributes to change for greater impact in SSA.

In our review, we identified various factual errors or omissions that may misrepresent the situation. We also raise a number of points that should be communicated back to the TF for their consideration as they finalize the report.

*<Section on factual errors omitted here but all are included in the Alliance submission on covering factual errors>*

##### **Strategic Issues regarding the TF Recommendations**

1. CIAT is in favor of rather major changes in the way that the Centers operate and are structured in Africa. The situation regarding program alignment in Chapter 4 is a clear and honest representation of the current problems and their magnitudes. The figures showing programmatic alignment between CGIAR and SSA SRO/NARS priorities are conceptually good. However, the TF report was vague about characteristics of current CG system priorities that should be terminated as well as those new priorities that the CGIAR should take on board. The idea that Centers should focus only on research of high probability of success (p 37) could

actually accentuate overlap with NARS activities while foregoing more strategic potentially high pay off breakthrough research.

2. Center mandates defined decades ago do not apply in today's environment. The needs of partners and CGIAR Centers that can best meet those needs should be the main consideration as reform is planned and implemented. Without denying Centers' share of responsibility for the current situation, it is also due to demands from NARS/SROs that were not being met under the old system and to donors who supported activities to support their own agendas. Thus, the major changes that are needed will not take place if the old mandates are used as the criteria for change.
3. We find it odd that two distinct governance models were proposed for the two regional entities in SSA. If the corporate governance structure is adopted, both entities should follow the same model. There would be many problems in trying to implement this fragmented approach to governance as major changes are made.
4. The CIAT BOT worries about decisions about structure before functions are clearly defined and are known to work. We are in favor of the recommended priority setting process and unified strategic plans as a first step. We also agree that there needs to be mechanisms to ensure that Centers are delivering on those priorities. However, we do not think that the single corporate model will work. As the TF report points out, the costs of making this drastic change is not known. Costs must be considered, financial as well as other costs. The risks of this decision must be considered, and these have not been addressed. The TF recommendation of a global corporate structure for the Centers is premature. This recommendation is our main problem with the report.
5. CIAT believes that the Alliance must be structured and empowered to solve many of the conflicts and competition problems that have occurred in the past and to carry forward the unified SSA strategic planning process. The report recognizes this on page 35, suggesting that CBC/CDC should work with partners to prepare the MTPs. We agree with this direction and suggest that the Alliance is an essential part of the changes that are necessary in SSA and globally. The Alliance should continue its work, making sure that it is empowered to solve programmatic alignment problems and program development, working with SROs and NARS. CIAT is in favor of a strong Alliance Board that will make decisions and ensure that they are enforced.

## **2. CIMMYT**

### **Response to DRAFT REPORT OF THE CGIAR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA TASK FORCES**

#### **A. Factual errors**

<Section incorporated in the Alliance response covering factual errors.>

## **B. Questions and comments to the DRAFT Report/Task Forces**

1. **The TFs need to specify whether they recommend to consolidate**
  - “Work of the centers headquartered in SSA”
  - “The work of the centers whose work predominantly focus on SSA”
  - “Research activities focused on SSA”
2. The report states “Given that the entity would continue to carry global responsibilities, in addition to serving as focal point of the CGIAR in WCA, the TFs consider that the entity could be called CGIAR WCA Global Center [and CGIAR ESA Global Center].” – **The TFs need to specify what they mean with “global responsibilities”.**
3. The report states “The key constituent units of the ESA Global Center would be a *livestock research unit* (successor to ILRI), an *agroforestry research unit* (successor to ICRAF), and a *semi-arid tropics/ESA unit* (established as a joint venture with ICRISAT).” – **The TFs need to justify the specific involvement of ICRISAT. Why ICRISAT? Why not CIAT and/or CIMMYT and/or IFPRI and/or ....?**
4. **The TFs need to justify why they recommend using two very different organizational models for ESA and WCA in a step towards consolidation of CGIAR activities?**
5. **CIMMYT recommends correcting all versions relating to the phrase “some CGIAR priorities should no longer be priorities (e.g., on-farm research in response to local problems)”.** “On-farm research” is not the issue. The issue is “in response to local problems” and the phrase should read “*some CGIAR priorities should no longer be priorities (e.g., research in response to local/sub-national problems)*”. Farmer-participatory research is a well established (and in many cases most appropriate!) research method to find more appropriate solutions that can be scaled up beyond the local level.
6. Similarly to point 5, the report seems to extend in some parts a very traditional and linear approach to research and technology transfer, and questions the centers’ involvement in issues such as technology transfer or seed systems. To the extent as regional (ie non-local) and global issues on technology transfer and seed systems are *researched*, they must be included in the centers’ agenda. **A narrow focus on “upstream research” ignores one of the most important challenges to the CGIAR’s research agenda – the very interface with “poverty” and the people the CGIAR claims to serve.**
7. The report endorses a clear alignment with SRO priorities. While such an approach seems obvious, it is ignorant of the fact that SROs at this stage insufficiently represent the people and institutions in SSA. Current SROs represent mostly the public research sector in SSA. They inadequately represent the “grass-root” level and private sector. In this regard, note the recent news ([www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org), 30-Apr-05) acknowledging that Prof Wangari Maathai (Kenyan Nobel Prize winner) “*was elected president of ECOSOCC by its civil-society organization members. The body aims to bridge the gap between African governments and institutions, and the 830 million people on the continent, by giving them a proper voice in decision-making. "This African Union is a union of African peoples,"*

*Konare asserted. "We can never build a real, genuine democracy - if we isolate ourselves from the real participation of the ordinary citizens."* Consequently, **the TFs needs to address the issue on how "the CGIAR of the future" takes consideration of multi-sector approaches and inputs, or how "the CGIAR of the future should plan to deal with "the public" versus "the public sector"**. This is particularly important as many SSA countries have engaged in economic liberalization programs which include/affect core components of the CGIAR agenda (agriculture) and, in an increasing number of instances, give the same status to public and private research programs. (Note. to assume that the private sector or civil society at large does not contribute to development of the poor would be quite ignorant).

### **C. Questions and comments by CIMMYT to the Science Council**

**Comment 1:** The TFs recommend that *"the CGIAR commission other task forces to identify programmatic and structural alignment needs and opportunities in the remaining regions."* - **As a global center with a significant involvement in SSA and other regions, CIMMYT requests that the role of global and eco-regional functions in the context of a future structure is defined and agreed before proceeding further.** This is particularly important as the TFs terminology of "Regional Global Center" (as implied by the terms "WCA Global Center" and "ESA Global Center") is ambiguous and as another TF has been working in parallel on global alliances (eg the CIMMYT-IRRI alliance) and "truly" global issues (in particular related to genetic resources).

Principally, there are four approaches feasible for consolidating centers and activities:

- A. Eco-regional centers (3-5) with global externalities but no global mandate or role.
- B. Eco-regional centers (3-5) that assume global mandates/roles for specific areas of comparative advantage.
- C. Global centers that assume eco-regional mandates/roles for their geographic location.
- D. A small number of centers with eco-regional (3-5 centers) and global (1-2 centers) mandates/roles.

(Note that options B, C and D all require a clear definition of "global" and "eco-regional" functions to prevent the pitfalls of the past.)

CIMMYT urges the Science Council/CGIAR to make a decision, whether for A, B, C, or D. - It is furthermore CIMMYT's opinion that Option D is both the most feasible and viable option given current centers roles (in particular related to genetic resources which are held in trust for human kind, not a particular region) and existing inter-center initiatives and activities (incl. Challenge Programs). It requires that

1. Programmatic and structural alignment needs and opportunities are indeed conducted in the remaining regions
2. The discussions on the CIMMYT-IRRI alliance are expanded and/or complemented to include all functions that are defined to be "truly global" in nature

**Comment 2:** The TFs look at the programmatic issues of the CGIAR agenda. When looking at recommendations such as *“the CGIAR agree in principle, and put in place a process, to consolidate all CGIAR Centers and activities into one global corporate entity”*, the CGIAR cannot ignore that its centers are also the employer of over 10,000 staff (IRS, RRS, NRS) which are a core asset to the CGIAR programmatic agenda. To the same extent, the centers currently have the legal responsibility for likely over 1000 donor projects. - While CIMMYT endorses a consolidation of centers and activities, it also reminds the Science Council that it has a responsibility towards centers’ staff and donors to project a clear (and not ambiguous) future structure, a transparent approach to staffing of that structure, and a clear business plan on how to deal with the administrative issues of such a change. Otherwise, the ambiguity of change – which has proven to be lengthy in the past – may result in a significant erosion of investors confidences, the CGIAR’s scientific capacity and irretrievable loss to its science, undocumented institutional memory and, potentially, genetic resources. In brief:

1. **Decide where to go!**
2. **Decide on how to transition!**

### 3. IFPRI

#### ***IFPRI VERSION OF CGIAR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA TASK FORCES***

The IFPRI Board of Trustees has reviewed the report and the recommendations put forth by the Task Forces, and has the following preliminary comments:

- shifting to a corporate governance model would be an extremist step. The shift to a corporate governance model would produce a highly bureaucratic system and would hinder flexibility and innovation in research activities.

- the purpose and process by which the Task Forces have come up with this set of recommendations need to be clearly stated within the report. This clarification should include the following:

- 1) Analysis of the pros and cons of a centralized system versus a decentralized system, as well as any other models that were considered
- 2) Analysis of the costs and benefits and all financial aspects of shifting toward a centralized system
- 3) Analysis of implications for the governance structure.

These comments and IFPRI management’s comments are included in the text below:

**<Note: IFPRI’s BoT comments have been incorporated in the response above>**

### 4. ILRI

#### ***ILRI Board of Trustees Response to the SSA Task Force Report***

## **Introductory Remarks**

ILRI Board of Trustees has shared and thoroughly discussed the SSA Task Force report at its Board retreat on 2 April 2005 and at its following ordinary meeting. The ILRI BoT recognizes the need for change within the CGIAR system both as regards programmatic and structural issues. ILRI was created resulting from the largest structural change in the CGIAR System in the last 10 years, moving from two separate mid-sized Africa-based centers with different and regional mandates, to one institute with a global mandate for livestock research. Considering this change, the Board of Trustees has a number of experiences to share in the light of forth-coming changes within the CGIAR system. The most important experiences were (i) the merger of ILCA and ILRAD was preceded by a thorough programmatic analysis to ensure the benefits and its new global mandate was put in a broad CGIAR perspective, (ii) development of a coherent agenda for all livestock research with synergies at programmatic as well as structural and financial level, (iii) the synergies and complementarities of research and adoption of results across regions leading to more GPG, (iv) the synergies of the merger of the two institutes, although successful, has taken considerable efforts to achieve, bringing both different cultures and research programmes together. ILRI has now moved decisively ahead in implementing its mandate, providing, for example, a platform for bioscience work (BECA) in collaboration with SRO's and NARS in eastern and central Africa. ILRI has transformed ILRI Addis into a multi-CGIAR Center facility. ILRI has also been charged by the CDC to coordinate a regional MTP between centers and ASARECA.

In the light of these experiences, the ILRI Board of Trustees has come to the following analysis.

## **ILRI Board of Trustees Analysis**

### *The Board of Trustees:*

- recognizes the need and urgency to bring about change in the CGIAR System
- is in broad agreement with the report's analysis concerning weaknesses, challenges and opportunities for SSA Agriculture
- accepts, to a large extent, the report's analysis of weaknesses and strengths of agricultural research in SSA involving NARS, SRO's and CG centers, especially as regards coordination issues
- appreciates the TF proposals for programmatic and structural alignment in SSA; it notes, however, a number of ambiguities and inconsistencies that need to be analyzed and addressed:
  - Link to the System's strategies and priorities process
  - Confusion between collaboration and overlap
  - Form put before function
  - Role of policy research and reforms
  - SSA realities, particularly the strengths and weaknesses of NARS and SRO's
  - Specific role of CG centers
  - Role of non-CG Northern players

- has problems understanding the rationale for the TF proposals with regard to structural alignment *in SSA* as there seems to be no link to an overall CGIAR vision, mandate and overall structure
- feels that the TF underestimates recent progress made by the Alliance and underway in SSA with regard to research coordination and sub-regional MTP's
- considers the proposal for one global corporate model unrealistic

## **ILRI Board of Trustees Position**

### *The Board of Trustees:*

**Empowers the Board Chair and Director General to engage proactively in the process of responding to the SSA TF report along the following two basic lines:**

- **Help to promote a process for consolidation of the CGIAR System as a whole through an extended and strengthened Alliance/Federation model with increased responsibilities and powers for oversight, monitoring and coordination, made up of global and regional centers.**
- **Considering the particular urgency and opportunities for reform in SSA, take action within the ESA Region to move the process ahead.** To this end:
  - Identify the functions the CGIAR is expected to play in ESA in the coming years and based on such functional analysis, then design an appropriate organizational structure for the region. (Form following function).
  - Propose the establishment of a small work group involving members of the SSA-TF, the most directly involved centers and a representation of the other centers to carry out this analysis and to design an appropriate organizational response.
  - Commit ILRI to fully engage in this process and to actively implement its outcome.

In this process, however, the ILRI Board of Trustees is not ready to compromise on the ILRI global mandate with regard to livestock production and animal health.

### **Comment 5:**

The report does an admirable job of characterizing the status of agricultural research in sub-Saharan Africa, highlighting the key issues facing it, and identifying the potential for greater research synergy both among CGIAR Centres and between them and SROs/NARS in the region. It documents thoroughly the large number and variety of CGIAR programmes/projects carried out in SSA and provides an excellent assessment of research coordination problems on the African continent. The fact that the 4 Centres based in SSA implement 82 programmes/projects whilst an additional 80 are carried out by non-SSA based Centres shows the enormous need for coordination and alignment. The conclusions and structural recommendations reached by the TF are, therefore, far-reaching and involve major organizational adjustments to the CGIAR's operations in SSA.

The report notes that, in addition to a necessary realignment of Centres' activities, a programmatic alignment between the CGIAR Centres and SROs/NARS is required. Unfortunately, SROs and in particular NARS are, with very few exceptions, still very weak as they are underfunded, understaffed, and thus often lacking in critical mass to be meaningful partners in a realignment process. Whilst the report itself (p. 2, third bullet) states that "the sustainable development and strengthening of the capacity of national agricultural research systems to effectively address their agricultural research challenges is a major role of the CGIAR," there are no longer major CGIAR programmes to address this role. The only CG Centre having had this mandate (ISNAR) was dissolved in 2004 and the ISNAR Programme under IFPRI's direction has neither the focus nor the critical mass to achieve this goal. To carry forward a successful alignment between the CGIAR and SROs/NARS, the CGIAR would indeed have to turn again to a concerted effort to provide African Governments with assistance in agricultural research institution strengthening/capacity building. This issue is not addressed in the report.

There is a fortunate coincidence in the new CGIAR System Priorities being defined at a time when realignment of research activities in SSA is under consideration. Coordinating, concentrating, streamlining, and strengthening of a few major lines of research in SSA based on the new System Priorities, once approved, would appear to offer many advantages. A regionally differentiated approach to medium term planning with the focus on two African ecoregions – West and Central Africa (WCA) and East and South Africa (ESA) – would certainly seem appropriate to achieving such a programmatic realignment.

The organizational requirements are another matter. The TF defines the problem facing the CGIAR in SSA as primarily 'structural' rather than 'programmatic' in nature (p. 26). While the decentralized nature of the CGIAR is a major cause of many of the programmatic issues documented in the report – overlapping mandates, inter-centre competition, centre-NARS competition, high transactions costs, misaligned priorities – it may not necessarily follow that the solution to these problems lies, *in the first instance*, in structurally consolidating the existing CGIAR Centres in SSA. This approach appears to take as given the current mandates of these centres and seeks to better delineate their responsibilities by consolidating their governance and management systems. The tasks of developing a common vision and strategy for SSA and an agreed set of priorities formulated jointly with SROs/NARS would be undertaken only after these structural adjustments were in place.

The TF may wish to consider an alternate approach – elaboration of the programme structure most suited to the research needs of SSA and the corresponding organizational model(s) most appropriate to that structure. Here it would be useful to take into account genomic similarities across crops and the scope for structurally different approaches to crop improvement. As well, it would be helpful to see how an integrated programme of research might be structured to address the cross-cutting issues of natural resources management, policy, and institutions.

## **Comment 6:**

## **I. General comments**

There is an agreement on the need for the CGIAR reform and the issues raised by the authors are pertinent. The report accurately captures the priority institutional problems that must be addressed as the CGIAR enters the 21st century.

The report makes a good, concise, and sound diagnostic of the problems, challenges and opportunities of agricultural research in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It further analyzes the role of the CGIAR Centers and their contribution to agricultural research in the region over the last two decades or so, and highlights both strengths and weakness found at programmatic and organizational levels. The report demonstrates, through a logical and relevant rationale, the need to reform the CGIAR system to bring in necessary internal coherence and cohesion enabling it to delivery its mandate in a more coordinated and optimal way. Besides, the conclusions and recommendations of the Task Forces corroborate and consolidate the recommendations made by previous similar assessments, and there seems to be a general consensus both from within and outside (NARS, SROs, partners) the CGIAR Centers on the necessity to reform the system. The typology of programmatic overlap is helpful in identifying opportunities for improvement and saving of resources. The analysis is thorough and it is difficult to question the evidence/conclusions on the lack of effective coordination/collaboration, inter-centre competition and rivalry and poor cohesion in SSA.

While we agree that current CGIAR funding mechanisms have helped to reinforce structural problems, radical structural changes are necessary and indeed will in turn help resolve the funding mechanism problems themselves. With all its problems, one of the main strengths of the CG system has been its continuity and fairly good stability. These have permitted it to accumulate experiences and lessons, attract observers and even critics that have helped it to evolve and adapt, to continue to be relevant and productive in accordance with its underlying mandate. The report makes a good analysis of this.

In short, the “CG system” has evolved more as a collection of clones of very good and successful initial centers than as a system that integrates its parts efficiently and effectively.

However, by working separately, each Center faces many similar difficulties. These are usually associated with the fact that the Center’s work constitutes part of a “technology innovation system/process” (regional or national) that misses not only the core contribution the particular Center can make but a lot of other elements. Since those other missing elements in the system limit the room for action, effectiveness and value of its own efforts and results, each Center has been forced to evolve its mandate, first intellectually and then de facto, to cover and compensate for other missing elements in the innovation systems. Those missing or weak elements have included NARIs, extension, information dissemination, policies, institutional support, other forms of support to production and marketing, etc.

Some Centers have done this compensatory work well enough to keep attracting support, others not so well. As a result of such adjustments, Centers have overlapped in their substantive research areas and through partnerships. Unfortunately, they have not always been able to accept, accommodate and use such coincidences as opportunities for building bridges

and collaborating with greater mutual benefits for partners and their respective constituencies. Any one Center accepting such growing overlaps risks accepting that others could or were probably doing part of its work, which could be considered redundant. Donors and their changing funding priorities have raised the stakes further.

Fortunately, the comprehensive analysis of the task forces in this report provides a clear picture of what happened over time and what is happening on the ground to the whole innovation “systems” that the CG system is expected to constitute and reinforce. As such the recommendations are to facilitate a proper re-accommodation of the different components to improve the “physiology” of the overall innovation system, which includes the CG system components, the boundary partners such as SROs and NARSs (as conglomerate of other research organizations) and other complementary components such as extension, information dissemination, marketing, policies, institutional and services support etc.

Even though recommendations in the report are bound to affect only the CG components of the overall innovation system, e.g., in terms of improving interactions and joint work among themselves and with boundary research partners, by working better they are also more likely to improve the work and performance of the overall innovation system.

The interest and objectives of each CG Center contrast with the objectives of the overall innovation system, to which such CGs are expected to add value. How to help the components to visualize and maintain a focus on the intents and objectives of the overall innovation system to plan, guide and evaluate their individual plans and delivery is a challenge to the leadership of decision makers and policy makers.

## **II. Specific issues for further reflection**

### **Structural changes proposed**

The report does not ask the question **'why' has the current situation of fragmented non-priority activity arisen.** 'Structural solutions' in the CGIAR in the past have tended to add layers of new governance, centralizing problems that should be devolved and fail to address causes. There are a few indicators of possible causes on pages 17-19: Time spent raising funds; lack of national and donor commitment to research - very few PRSPs have ever mentioned the need to develop national research capacity; CGIAR Centers moving into the gaps left by reduced national capacity because of the need for the CG Centers to demonstrate 'impact'; short term donor perspective; policy and staff changes; and weak national delivery systems.

The report does not justify **how the structural changes will enable the system to pursue more research and more relevant research to the realities of SSA.** In the same way, the report does not explain how the proposed changes will help achieve the areas of high priority for the CGIAR: biodiversity, producing food at low costs, poverty alleviation, improving policies and institutional innovation. The report does not explain how much disruption the reform will entail. No costs for this reform, nor the increased benefits in dollar figures, nor the

economies to be made, have been stated. The report does not cover the risks in creating a single board: loss of expertise of existing boards, more centralized and less flexible, etc.

### **Restructuring format**

Comments were diverging in regards to the proposed structural changes.

The rationale for this “transition” recommendation of creating **two different organizational models** for East and Southern Africa (ESA): Corporate model, and West and Central Africa (WCA) is not clear beyond “pragmatism” and leaves room for speculation. The rationale needs to be further detailed. However, the creation of two regional Centers reflects the consensus recommendation of African stakeholders several years ago and could even be envisaged as a long-term solution rather a transitional solution.

While the Centers currently based in each region can serve as the base for initial structural consolidation, the **two new Centers must soon emerge with their own institutional identity and composition based on strategic programmatic priorities**. This means, for example, that if the Science Council strategic planning exercise concludes with a priority for sorghum and millet research in WCA, then the current programs of ICRISAT in that sub-region must become an integral part of that new WCA global center. Similarly, if the SC priorities include maize research in east and southern Africa, then the current programs of CIMMYT must become integral parts of the ESA global center. Whether this means a secondment of staff, or that the current ICRISAT and CIMMYT staff would become full-fledged members of the new Centers, depends in part on the decisions to be made for revisiting global structures of the CGIAR system. What is important is that the new regional Centers -working under the overall guidance of the SC and CGIAR Board - must have control over budget, staff and programming decisions, and not have to negotiate these with Centers outside of Africa.

Another suggestion is going for a **global structural reform of the entire CGIAR system now**. Because there is so much overlap in crops such as banana, sorghum, millet, maize, cowpea, almost all crops are targeted for improvement in ALL regions, there will still be lack of cohesion for each crop and still be overlapping and competing interests between two Centers. Looking at the priorities for each of the SRO's, similarities are greater than differences. If there is restructuring of the Centers only in Africa as a first step, will the existing Centers in other parts of the world then need to "give up" control of the activities of their African staff and programs? For example, if CIAT and CIP have to give up their African cassava and sweet potato program staff and activities to the new African center, will then CIAT and CIP (perhaps as a new single entity) in return not inherit some new clear mandate to work on all crops critical for Latin America?

### **Timeline**

Rather than accepting the TF recommendation of completing full implementation of consolidation within 18 months, it would be more prudent to develop a timeline of the key actions to be taken with reasonable estimates of time required, and then let the final time

frame emerge from that analysis. It may also be appropriate to open to alternative means of implementing Recommendation 5 based on lessons learned from the INIBAP and ISNAR experiences. But the learnings of those earlier experiences should not serve to paralyze meaningful structural reform, but rather to guide how such reform can be most successfully introduced.

### **Partner changes**

The CGIAR system is not the only, and probably not the main player in this context. **Other players also need to ‘reform’ themselves** in order to reach the conditions and factors required to address the serious problems and challenges facing the SSA region towards ensuring food security, poverty alleviation and preservation of the environment. How this will happen is still to be seen. Maybe the report could suggest ways and means to institutionalize a regular dialogue/consultation between the CGIAR Centers, NARS and SROs, and donors, at least during the reform period of the CGIAR system, as a way of ensuring programmatic alignment, sharing of responsibility, ownership of the overall partnership, and monitoring of progress.

Similarly, the report does not sufficiently explain **how the reform that is proposed will bring solutions to the weaknesses with NARS** (lack of connection between NARS and CG Centers priorities, high level of competition between NARS and CG Centers, etc). The report does not mention if NARS will be consulted on this proposed reform. Such a discussion could help define the conditions for success of the reform prior to its implementation.

The report seems to suggest that **SROs will be research implementers**. This might not be a good suggestion given that they have emerged mainly as mechanisms to help the NARSs to become stronger and more effective - but not through doing their work. In this sense, the SROs should be better seen as partners of the CGIAR components in a joint work to strengthen the work of the NARS. In fact, SROs should be thought as facilitators of the interaction and collaboration of the CGIAR systems and the National Agricultural Research and Extension systems (NARESSs).

The review, analysis and recommendations being done and proposed for the CGIAR components should probably be also done for the other components in the overall innovation system, i.e., the NAREs, SROs and supporters. In each case there is a need to improve their respective internal structure and interactions as well as their structural linkages and interactions with their immediate partners.

### **Funding issues**

“Funding” issues and ever-changing donor policies/fashions have in recent years driven the CGIAR. Structural reorganization, acquisitions and mergers will not work unless the way in which the programmes are funded changes. Donor resources come from two sources - centrally managed funds and increasing country/regional resources. Perhaps one reason that donors have moved away from non-targeted funding is precisely because many have lost faith with the current system to make the best decisions on how to spend donor money wisely.

Most Centers rightly see they need to "follow the money" and the big money seems mostly headed for Africa so most Centers now have activities there, resulting in overlapping mandates and competition. The money is headed that way because most donors perceive the problems of Africa are so urgent. But this can also be dangerous, there are still many pressing needs and huge numbers of poor in Latin America and Asia, and the Centers located there will also be critically important but only if there will also be sufficient funds to do research in those regions. Any reform will need to make assessments of how much needs to be invested in Africa relative to other regions, and the case must be made to donors for proportional allocation of funds.

Should programmes be opened up to competition with NARS able to bid along with ARIs? There are lessons emerging from the Challenge programmes and the behavior it has spawned that would be worthy of objective analysis.

In summary, we should look much more at the funding and the interaction between national, regional and international funding - e.g. the research focuses of the PRSPs etc.

### **Left out themes**

The report has ignored some of the key dimensions of rural economies and societies in SSA:

- Forestry;
- Social exclusion and inequity, erosion of rights, declining terms of trade, as manifested through trade agreements, for example;
- Equity, tenure, and rights;
- Gender roles and equity;
- Instability and civil strife was covered in the report but there is no suggestion as to how agricultural research might respond to the issue (e.g. by building on efforts such as "Seeds of Hope")