

**REPORT OF THE
CGIAR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA TASK FORCES**

Executive Summary

-The Tervuren Consensus-

**April 25, 2005
CGIAR Secretariat**

Summary and Recommendations

The CGIAR created two Task Forces (TFs) to conduct a study on rationalization of CGIAR operations across the System, starting with Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). TF1 was asked to examine CGIAR's work in terms of its programmatic coherence with and relevance to the CGIAR's vision, goals and its clients' needs, with a view to identifying opportunities for integration and synergies. TF2 was given the task of reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the existing System arrangements and identify opportunities for organizational adjustments towards increasing effectiveness and efficiency of CGIAR research. The two TFs decided to work closely together, hold joint meetings, and prepare a joint report.

The observations and conclusions presented in this report were drawn based on data or information collected from available published documents/reports and using instruments which included the following: 1) a survey of the perceptions of the CGIAR stakeholders in SSA; 2) a survey of the CGIAR Centers infrastructure, staff resources, funding, program focus, and interaction with partners (mode and product of cooperation) in the region; and 3) field consultations/visits undertaken by consultants engaged by the TFs.

SSA Agriculture: Challenges and Opportunities

A good understanding of SSA agriculture — its problems and potentials — is essential in assessing what role the CGIAR should play and the contributions it should make in the region. The Inter-Academy Council's Panel presented a comprehensive diagnosis of the problems in SSA agriculture, a summary of which is given in this report.

At the farm level, agricultural production systems in SSA are generally diverse and complex involving numerous crop and animal species in mixed systems. They are mostly small-scale subsistence farms worked largely by women. The following are the key challenges facing agriculture in the region: 1) degradation of the natural resource base which includes severe soil erosion, soil nutrient depletion, loss of forests and marshlands, loss of biodiversity, overgrazed grasslands, and silted rivers; 2) natural and man-made disasters which are recurring events on the continent over a long period of time. These include the HIV/AIDS pandemic and malaria, numerous animal and plant diseases, and insect pests which significantly reduce farm productivity, recurring droughts and floods, and civil strife or internal conflicts; 3) weak agricultural knowledge and technology institutions; and 4) a policy environment which is generally not supportive of agriculture.

There is, however, a clear recognition of an enormous potential to improve the existing situation and achieve strong agricultural growth. A key factor of this potential is the increased recognition by the region's leaders of the importance of agriculture and their higher level of commitment to support it. Under the NEPAD framework, leaders committed to implement the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) which called for an average of 6% annual agricultural growth through 2015. Although the main responsibility for addressing the problems rests on the individual governments in SSA, assistance from the international donor community

will continue to be needed, and agricultural research remains a critical area for support. Such assistance should be provided in the most effective and efficient manner.

Agricultural Research in Sub-Saharan Africa: Issues and Concerns

The CGIAR has a strong presence and extensive operations in SSA. There are a total of 70 Center offices/sites in SSA, most of which were established in the past two decades. They are distributed in 21 countries and concentrated in Western, Eastern and Southern sub-regions.

The CGIAR budget for SSA in 2003 was US\$ 173.3 million, of which US\$ 89.7 million was allocated to the four SSA-based Centers (ICRAF, IITA, ILRI, and WARDA) representing 52% of total CGIAR expenditures in SSA; and US\$ 83.6 million was allocated to activities of the non-SSA Centers, representing 48% of total CGIAR expenditures in SSA. A wide range of other public and private sector institutions have also made significant investments in agricultural research in SSA. Private sector investment is still a small component representing only about 2% of the total investment of \$1.1 billion made by all donors in 2000.

In 2003, there were a total of 162 CGIAR Centers' programs/projects in SSA, of which 82 were conducted by the SSA-based Centers. The Centers reported 117 SSA programs/projects which they carried out in partnership with other institutions. To implement these programs/projects, the Centers engaged a total of 389 internationally recruited staff (IRS), 121 regionally recruited staff (RRS), and 2607 local staff (LS).

CGIAR research has made significant contributions to SSA agriculture. Some recent examples are the NERICAS, drought tolerant maize varieties, improved sorghum varieties, improved tilapia for integrated aquaculture-agriculture, Vitamin A-rich orange-flesh sweet potato, cassava mosaic disease resistant varieties, promotion of agroforestry, and control of trypanosomiasis in cattle.

Notwithstanding the high priority attached to SSA by the CGIAR and the important contributions it has made to advance African agriculture, there are a number of issues raised by stakeholders in regard to the Centers' research priorities, programs, and modes of operation in SSA. Earlier reviews of the CGIAR activities in SSA consistently concluded that one of the main reasons for the limited impact of the Centers in SSA was the apparent lack of connection between the priorities of the NARS and those of the Centers. With the establishment of Sub-Regional Organizations (SROs) which has stimulated the member countries/organizations to develop national plans as a basis for the development of sub-regional strategic plans, there appears to be good opportunities now for the CGIAR System to build its priorities consistent with those set by the national and regional partners. A comparison of the research priorities drawn up by the SROs and FARA with the CGIAR System Priorities identified through a process led by the Science Council showed broad similarities, particularly in terms of research themes and also some specific differences.

A survey of stakeholders' perceptions identified areas of strengths and weaknesses of CGIAR work as well as opportunities and threats. Strong features include doing good research, publishing research findings, generating research outputs, defining research priorities, and coordinating networks. Weak areas include delivering research outputs to users, overlap in

mandates of Centers, assessing impact realistically, utilizing resources efficiently, and working with other CGIAR and non-CGIAR Centers. Stakeholders see the following as opportunities for the System: NEPAD, FARA/SROs, stronger National Agricultural Research Institutes and Universities, presence of Advanced Research Institutes, a more system-wide perspective for the CGIAR in SSA, greater sharing of information, resources and expertise by the Centers, and Centers developing more partnerships. Threats to the System include current downward trends in unrestricted funding, increasing trends in levels of overheads of CGIAR Centers, and competition between Centers.

Complementing the stakeholders survey, field visits and consultations conducted by the TF consultants identified a number of issues and concerns, the most important of which were:

- Weak mechanisms for effective and constructive interaction among Centers;
- High level of competition among Centers and duplication of efforts, including with NARS, on a range of activities in SSA;
- Lack of a cohesive strategy for CGIAR work in SSA.

The foregoing issues on research priorities and programmatic and structural/organizational concerns provide the basis and principles for programmatic and structural/organizational alignment of CGIAR's work in SSA.

Programmatic Alignment

The CGIAR has done, and continues to do, high quality research in SSA, generating many useful research outputs appreciated by stakeholders. However, significant programmatic weaknesses remain, especially relating to:

- Programmatic alignment between the CGIAR Centers and SROs/NARS;
- Programmatic alignment and collaboration between the CGIAR Centers.

Much of the CGIAR research in SSA is undertaken in close partnership with the NARS and SROs. However, some CGIAR research activities are largely in response to specific local/sub-national problems that are unlikely to produce regional or global public goods, while other high priority activities are yet to be fully incorporated to the CGIAR research agenda. Also, the collaboration among the CG Centers working in SSA could be improved. (For example, the survey of Centers conducted by the TFs shows that, out of 117 reported projects in SSA, only 38 involved significant cooperation with another Center.)

Four types of programmatic overlap between CGIAR Centers in SSA have been identified:

1. Overlaps in Center mandates: for example, between IPGRI and IITA on banana, and IITA and CIAT on cassava.
2. Overlaps in Center activities: for example, where two or more Centres carrying out research on the same commodity. Of the 61 CGIAR research locations in SSA responding to the question of the current research focus of activities from that location in terms of major CGIAR commodities, 70% reported research on the same commodity as at least one other Center.
3. Overlaps in location: where two or more Centers have activities in the same country. The

Centres have offices or research sites in 21 SSA countries. The largest concentration occurs in Kenya where 9 Centers have a presence. Other countries, such as Ethiopia, Cameroon, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, each host offices/sites from five or more Centers.

4. Overlaps in geographical range of intended impact: these occur when projects of two or more Centers have the same target area within SSA. For example, Tanzania is targeted for impact by 53 CGIAR projects.

For the CGIAR activities in SSA to be aligned with CGIAR System Priorities, and at the same time contribute, to the maximum appropriate extent, to the priorities of the NARS and SROs, there is need for:

- A coherent vision and strategy for the CGIAR in SSA, based on the new System Priorities, and developed in close association with all stakeholders;
- Coherent Medium Term Plans (MTPs) for East and Southern Africa (ESA), and West and Central Africa (WCA), prepared and implemented by all CGIAR Centers working in SSA (regardless of their headquarters' location);
- Effective structural arrangements for oversight and implementation of the MTPs, ensuring that all types of unnecessary overlap are avoided; and,
- Effective arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality, appropriateness and impact of the research activities of the CGIAR Centers in SSA.

Structural Alignment

The information collected by the TF suggests that there is no System vision for CGIAR in SSA, a large portfolio of un-coordinated CGIAR efforts, over-burdening of NARS, overlap of some Center activities, lack of integration mechanisms for Centers, a large number of projects that would have difficulty in qualifying as global public good (GPG)-producing research, and inter-Center dispute on mandates. In short, the problem faced is less programmatic; the core of the problem is structural. Even if one looks at programmatic alignment, the key concern is how to achieve alignment within the CGIAR itself.

Preferred Long-term Global CGIAR Structure. The CGIAR must first ask the question: what kind of a CGIAR structure would serve the CGIAR best, and then work its way backwards to figure out what changes in organization would be needed to reach that end state. The consensus view of the members of both TFs is that, in the long-term, the CGIAR should consolidate its operations under **one Board and one CEO** and manage the System through a **corporate governance model**. A new global legal entity would be established. Each of the existing Centers would become a subsidiary of the global entity. The entity would be governed by a single board, appointed by the CGIAR, with one CEO for the entire operation. *All* management authority in the existing Center Boards would be transferred to the single System Board.

Structural Alignment of CGIAR Operations in SSA. In view of the recommended long-term global structure for the CGIAR, the TFs consider that there are two options for adjusting the internal structure of the CGIAR in SSA:

- Consolidate the work of the Centers whose work predominantly focus on SSA into one regional entity;

- Consolidate the same Centers into two sub-regional entities: one for West and Central Africa (WCA), and the other for East and Southern Africa (ESA).

While the single SSA entity option is attractive, the TFs consider that it should be seen as an intermediate-term goal, and that over the short-term it would be more practical to proceed stepwise and initiate the CGIAR restructuring effort by creating two sub-regional entities. The sub-regional entities in SSA would serve as the CGIAR focal points in each sub-region, bringing in and facilitating inputs, as necessary, from the other CGIAR centers and other research actors.

For **WCA**, the most practical approach would be for the Centers involved to appoint the same individuals to a single Board that would manage all the involved Centers (as was done in the IPGRI-INIBAP arrangement), with the necessary adjustments in Board size to accommodate the host country or regional representation requirements. In the case of WARDA and IITA, the WARDA Governing Council could continue to serve as the umbrella entity for the consolidated operation. Given that the entity would continue to carry global responsibilities, in addition to serving as the focal point of the CGIAR in WCA, the TFs envision that the entity could be called ***CGIAR WCA Global Center***.

The TFs propose a novel organizational model for the **ESA** entity — the ***CGIAR ESA Global Center***—. This model would also serve as a pilot for the preferred long-term structure of the CGIAR and would involve using the “one Board, one CEO” corporate governance model at a smaller scale for managing the System’s activities based in ESA. 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). These operating units could have separate small program advisory committees helping the CEO and the COOs. While the corporate strategy would be developed by the CEO and the Board, the subsidiary units would prepare their own vision/strategy and operating plans in the context of the corporate strategy.

There is need for a short-term arrangement to ensure that the operations of the CGIAR and the SROs are well-aligned during the 18-month term the TFs envisage might be needed for the formation of the two sub-regional entities. The most important need is an arrangement for program planning and management for SSA or its sub-regions to improve the synergy between the programs of the 15 Centers and the SROs.

Recommendations

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.*

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

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.

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

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