

## Summary of ExCo 13 Discussion and Recommendations to the CGIAR on WARDA EPMR<sup>1</sup>

R. Rabbinge presented SC comments on the WARDA EPMR. He congratulated WARDA for a positive review and expressed SC's agreement with the review panel's program-related recommendations. He highlighted the following:

- SC joins the EPMR panel in acknowledging that WARDA has continued to do good research in spite of the Ivorian crisis.
- On WARDA's planned expansion of research work into east and southern Africa, SC also agrees with the panel that this should be done in a phased manner. A significant amount of research capacity strengthening would be needed.
- SC advises WARDA to give further attention to the panel's doubt on NERICA's ability to tolerate or overcome weed problems, a major characteristic that NERICA has been claimed to possess.
- SC welcomes the recent alignment with IRRI and CIAT on rice research. This initiative is expected to further strengthen rice research in the region.

N. Datta presented CGIAR Secretariat comments on the governance, management and finance aspects of the EPMR. She pointed out the following:

- There is a need to strengthen the WARDA Board's oversight function on programmatic and strategic issues. This could be done through a smaller and more focused Program Committee. The creation of an external Scientific Advisory Committee as suggested by the review panel should be carefully considered.
- The CGIAR Secretariat congratulates WARDA for the substantial improvement in its financial situation in recent years. It encourages the Center to further strengthen financial expertise on the Board and its staff.
- The CGIAR Secretariat also congratulates WARDA in pursuing an effective alignment of corporate services with IITA, and welcomes WARDA-IRRI-CIAT partnership in rice research for Africa.
- The CGIAR Secretariat encourages an early decision on WARDA's headquarters location.

### *Discussion:*

- ExCo members congratulated WARDA for a positive EPMR report.
- A concern was raised concerning the cost of transfer of IITA staff in Benin to WARDA. In response to some of the comments, Shellemiah Keya, WARDA Assistant Director General pointed out that a study by a WARDA consultant showed that the adopted arrangement would be more advantageous and cost-effective to the Center. He also informed ExCo that the Board had succeeded in appointing an external Science Advisory Committee to provide additional input on scientific issues.
- The issue of the complex governance structure of WARDA and especially its Council of Ministers was discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from Thirteenth Meeting of the CGIAR Executive Council (October 16-17, 2007) Summary Record of Proceedings, November 2, 2007.

- On the issue of the Center headquarters location, S. Keya clarified that Bouake, Cote d'Ivoire, is still the official headquarters site. A decision to move back to Bouake will be made as soon as the political and security situation in the host country is determined to be stable.

***Conclusion and ExCo Recommendation to the CGIAR:***

- *ExCo is pleased with a positive EPMR and recommends that the CGIAR endorse the 5<sup>th</sup> WARDA EPMR recommendations. The momentum to move forward should be maintained by the Center.*