

Bringing together  
the best of  
science and  
the best of  
development

---



**CGIAR**

Independent Review of the CGIAR System  
Synthesis Report



# **Bringing together the best of science and the best of development**

Independent Review of the CGIAR System

Synthesis Report

Elizabeth McAllister, Chair

November 2008



Copyright © 2008  
by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research  
All rights reserved

For information on this and other CGIAR publications, contact:

CGIAR Secretariat  
The World Bank  
MSN G6-601  
1818 H Street NW  
Washington, DC 20433 USA  
Tel: (202) 473-8951  
Fax: (202) 473-8110  
Email: [cgiar@cgiar.org](mailto:cgiar@cgiar.org)  
Web: <http://www.cgiar.org>

This publication should be cited as: CGIAR Independent Review Panel. 2008. *Bringing Together the Best of Science and the Best of Development*. Independent Review of the CGIAR System. Report to the Executive Council. Washington, DC.

Editing, design, and production by Communications Development Incorporated, Washington, DC.

The CGIAR Independent Review Panel was commissioned by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. This review is an independent publication that reflects the views of the panel members, who contributed in their personal capacities. This publication does not necessarily reflect the views of organizations that the panel members represent, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, or its Members.

# Overview: summary of findings and recommendations

Centers contribute value, but the CGIAR System is not achieving its full potential. Governance transformation is needed for leadership in a rebalanced partnership to articulate a shared, convincing strategy with a results orientation, clear authorities, and effective decisionmaking

The importance of reviewing the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) became starkly apparent to the Independent Review Panel in 2008 as food prices soared. World leaders called for rapid action to stem the effects of food price inflation as 100 million people were pushed into poverty and the ranks of the 800 million already suffering hunger began to swell. As trade barriers on rice and other food commodities were resurrected and food price protests hit many developing countries, the world community was reminded of the importance of food security to economic and political stability. The questions posed to the Panel by the CGIAR membership became compelling.

In our visits to the Centers and attendance at various forums over the year, the Panel was struck by the energy and dedication that Center leadership and scientists have for their work. We participated in several retreats with CGIAR members and stakeholders who worked hard for almost a year in an intensive change exercise to renew the CGIAR as a forum for bringing together the best of science and the best of development.

The CGIAR, however, suffers signs of age as it turns 37. It is in urgent need of structural change if it is to respond with its full potential to new challenges of food and environmental security. A renewed and rebalanced partnership is essential for the CGIAR System to improve its game.

In support of this renewal, the Panel offers its answers to the questions posed by the CGIAR Members in the form of key findings and recommendations, supported by a summary of its findings and a model for moving forward, detailed in this Synthesis Report. The Panel's full analysis is in its Technical Report.

The Panel's key conclusion is that the Centers contribute value, but the CGIAR System is not achieving its full potential. Governance transformation is needed for leadership in a rebalanced partnership to articulate a shared, convincing strategy with a results orientation, clear authorities, and effective decisionmaking.

The independent CGIAR network of research Centers matters—for achieving food security, for dealing with climate change, and for supporting achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The new global architecture for agriculture will need to respond rapidly to emergencies, such as crop, animal, and zoonotic diseases of global significance. It will also need to make sustained investments over the coming decades to address such complex challenges as mitigation and adaptation to climate change and biotechnology for the poor.

Despite working in a complex environment with significant management challenges, CGIAR-supported research has seen high returns. Global and regional meta-evaluations suggest that CGIAR investments have paid for themselves by a wide margin, even considering just a few well documented successes. Its multidisciplinary research activities and its range of collaborations position the CGIAR network of Centers as one for the world's most innovative development partnerships—and as a 21st century organization.

But this is a serious moment in the CGIAR System's history. Notwithstanding its contributions and potential, the CGIAR system has major shortcomings and is hitting below its weight. It has been largely absent from the key global debates on the food crisis and climate change, it lacks a coherent strategy, it has

A new compact—one based on separate governance and management and predictable funding—is needed to rebuild the cooperative spirit between Members and Centers and bring the best of science together with the best of development

experienced financial and administrative upheavals in recent years, and the trust between its constituent Centers and the donors that support them has deteriorated.

Center performance is uneven, financing arrangements have not kept pace with needs, system governance has become cumbersome and ineffective, and management practices require improvement. Financing in real terms has stagnated since the 1990s. The share of unrestricted funds has declined steadily since 1998 and with it capital investment. The Centers are experiencing difficulty attracting and retaining top scientists. As a consequence, the CGIAR Centers' influence and impact are less than they could be.

The CGIAR System has been attempting reform since 1994. Incremental, these attempts have largely failed to meet their ambitious aims. Needed now is extensive reform, particularly to address a dysfunctional governance structure that is at the root of the System's inability to change.

A new compact—one based on separate governance and management and predictable funding—is needed to rebuild the cooperative spirit between Members and Centers and bring the best of science together with the best of development.<sup>1</sup> Effective structural reform as the vital first step should allow new leadership to emerge. The rebalanced CGIAR partnership, with the mutual accountability recommended in this report, should facilitate the formulation of a bold collective strategy.

These challenges offer an opportunity for renewing and strengthening the international agricultural architecture as well as the CGIAR System. With a 3,300-person scientific staff dedicated to poverty reduction and one of the world's largest and most important germplasm collections, the System can reaffirm its value to humanity. It generates and delivers international public goods—scientific and technological knowledge, agricultural research products and services, and research capacities to respond to and anticipate demand—that are essential to improve agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability in the poor regions of the world.

## Findings

### Finding 1: The CGIAR-supported Centers contribute substantially to agricultural productivity and natural resource management

Overall, recent impact assessments of CGIAR research reveal very high returns on investment. A recent meta-analysis of all ex post impact assessments over the System's lifetime found benefits suggesting that total investments in the CGIAR have paid for themselves by a wide margin—benefits ranged from \$12 billion to \$120 billion. Regional impact studies in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa point to substantial benefits of crop genetic improvement research in Asia and of crop genetic improvement and biological control research in Africa. But they also illustrate that research impacts in Africa have been limited geographically, with lower positive returns on investment than in other regions—despite Sub-Saharan Africa's receiving the largest regional share of CGIAR investment (41 percent over the CGIAR's lifetime).

Crop genetic improvement research has received the most assessment and has generated evidence of profound positive impacts from the broad diffusion of improved varieties and subsequent spillover effects. Yield-enhancing and yield-stabilizing modern varieties produced by the Centers and their national partners have produced benefits of more than \$10 billion annually, due largely to improved wheat, rice, and maize. Recent research on a range of crops and traits (drought resistance and nutritional content) are generating outputs and outcomes assessed as very promising for potential impact.

Recent studies on the impact of natural resource management research, including pest management, show substantial benefits and positive internal rates of return on investment. Some benefits have occurred at a considerable scale and are of international significance. Notable examples are the work of the rice-wheat consortium in South Asia, biological control programs in Africa, and the Alternatives to Slash and Burn Program. But

much of the research impact for natural resource management is still on a much smaller geographic scale than that for crop genetic improvement, often because adoption depends on local collective action, extension services, or assignment of property rights. That means that the spillovers can be very limited, and the overall impacts constrained.

The number of studies on the impact of policy-oriented research has risen considerably in recent years. Policy-oriented research offers strong potential for generating broad impacts affecting many people in many countries. Estimating benefit-cost ratios is more difficult for policy-oriented research than for most other types of research. Even where the evidence is clear that policy advice was applied, the advice is usually only one of many influences.

### **Finding 2: The CGIAR and Centers need to take a more strategic approach to partnership**

The word *partnership* is greatly overused in the discourse of international development. Yet the CGIAR System cannot function effectively as a component of an international public goods delivery system without robust partnerships that ensure the distribution and use of CGIAR outputs. Although Centers have forged many high-value partnerships, most are short term and ad hoc. The resources, incentives, and strategic arrangements needed for an effective international public goods delivery system are not in place. The challenge for the CGIAR donors and Centers is to be part of such a system and to exercise vision and leadership in bringing it about. The green revolution of the 1970s in Asia was driven by a strategic vision that included the scientific discoveries of the CGIAR contributing to a delivery system that catalyzed large-scale agriculture and infrastructure investment. This resulted in an international public goods delivery system through strong partnerships between the CGIAR and the national agricultural research systems (NARS) and advanced research institutes.

New partnerships are needed to meet today's challenges—of food insecurity,

nutritional inadequacy, and climate change—especially in Africa. To be successful, these partnerships will need to apply the lessons of the first green revolution in Asia, with its clear long-term strategy for delivery system requirements, including financing for capacity and institution building. Without this, the current attention of world leaders on issues of food production and food security for the poor and vulnerable will come to very little.

Key characteristics of successful partnerships include:

- Written and mutually endorsed understanding of the “coincidence of objectives.”
- Stipulation and agreement on mutual expectations and the mechanisms for dispute resolution.
- Specification of “end points,” milestones, and a framework for ongoing evaluation.
- Inclusion of exit strategies and the conditions for their enactment.
- Where finances are part of the partnership, advance understanding on resource allocations, accountability, and management standards.

### **Finding 3: The Centers have made progress in addressing intellectual property protection, but more needs to be done**

The CGIAR and its Centers' capacity to handle issues of intellectual property and governance of genetic resources affects the status of the collections in genebanks, the exchange of germplasm, the ability of the Centers to collaborate with NARS and farmer organizations, and the kinds of partnerships they can establish with the private sector and advanced research institutes. The CGIAR cannot ignore or casually handle issues of intellectual property protection. While some Centers have relatively developed regimes, high levels of awareness, and staff dedicated to dealing with intellectual property issues, the majority of the Centers do not have in-house staff responsible for intellectual property issues and tend to deal with these issues on an ad hoc

basis, often reacting to crisis. The general view among people consulted by the Independent Review Panel is that Centers need to do more to effectively deal with issues of intellectual property protection.

**Finding 4: Gender is not adequately integrated into Centers' research mandates and outreach**

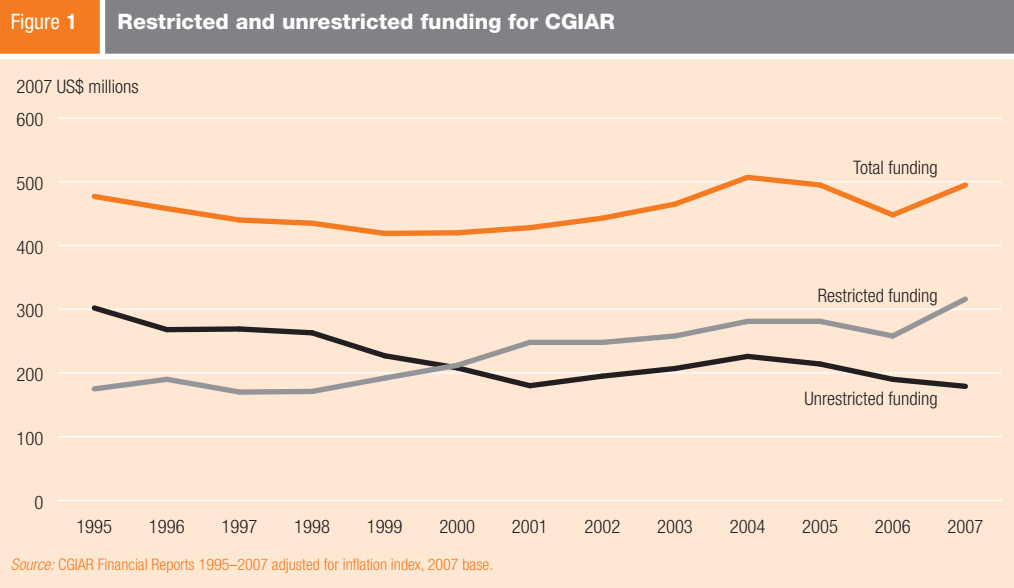
The Panel's analysis indicates that the CGIAR System appreciates gender integration as being important or very important to its research mandate and understands that the CGIAR and the Centers have not been fully effective in integrating gender into their research and outreach. But there is scant evidence to indicate that the contributions of women to agriculture and their special knowledge and needs are addressed at a level commensurate with their importance to agriculture, as recognized by the CGIAR and Center leadership. Institutionally, the CGIAR System has not built on best practice institutional accountability approaches to mainstream gender and to devise special measures, where necessary, to address the specific needs of women and girls. There is misplaced reliance by CGIAR leadership on staff advocacy functions below the executive level in convening Centers and in individual Centers, diverting responsibility from operations. Even so, there is a readiness

to develop a systemwide policy, strategy, and results framework.

**Finding 5: The Centers are in a quiet financial crisis**

Funding for the Centers has not grown in real terms for more than a decade (figure 1). In contrast, several international development institutions have received record replenishments of their concessionary and grant funds, suggesting that the problem has not been the unavailability of resources but a failure of the CGIAR and Centers to set up institutions that mobilize funds well.

Funding has been increasingly piecemeal rather than strategic. Every review of the CGIAR in the past decade has recommended stronger central coordination of funding and a tighter link between priorities, performance, and fund allocation. Yet funding has become increasingly "restricted," with a proliferation of smaller, targeted grants. While this has benefits for some donors, it means larger administrative costs for Centers, greater financial risk, and less flexibility to follow promising lines of research. It has also resulted in falling capital investments by the Centers at the risk of falling behind scientifically. All growth in funding from nonmembers is restricted. And while so far supporting CGIAR objectives, nonmember funding can also lead to further



fragmentation of CGIAR and Center core objectives.

The CGIAR Centers have been placed in an invidious position by the lack of clear, adequate, and consistent incentives. The discourse of the donor agencies has been rooted in the Paris Declaration principles of alignment, harmonization, devolved ownership, and mutual accountability. The incentives provided to the CGIAR by donors, however, have pushed competition and individual donor ownership, resulting in fragmentation. Many Centers currently manage 200–300 separate, relatively small projects, many with different terms, conditions, requirements, fiscal year reporting schedules, and overhead rates.

There are deficiencies in financial management at some Centers and limited tools for managing financial risk across the partnership. The cross-cutting multipartner Challenge Programs have increased the complexity of the research network and partnership and the difficulty of financial management and control. The ad hoc arrangements for different Challenge Programs do not provide a strong foundation of financial systems to cope with the rising numbers of such programs.

In good times, these would be significant problems. During the current food price crisis, new ideas and approaches are needed even more urgently. Because the problems are interrelated, the Panel believes that the financial challenges can probably be resolved only as part of an overall change in the institutional structure of the partnership. Centers need more resources, larger reserves, and especially more unrestricted funds, but donors are unlikely to provide them without greater assurance of strategic effectiveness and performance. Needed: a new institutional and financial structure with new tools for resource mobilization as part of a general reform package.

**Finding 6: Dysfunctional governance and management constrain the System's potential**

The CGIAR Charter enshrines what may be called “dispersed governance,” with no

effective locus for systemwide decisions on important governance matters. Because there is no empowered “entry point” into the CGIAR and no accepted leader who can act with authority for the Centers, decision-making is shifted down to individual Center boards or up to the Consultative Group. The expression of collective will of the members is at the Annual General Meeting (particularly its Business Meeting), a large body that can take decisions only by consensus. Specific decisions on vision, partnerships, organizational structure, research activities, and resource allocation are made by the individual boards and managements of the Centers. Between the Centers and the Annual General Meeting of the Consultative Group are bodies fulfilling only advisory or nonbinding oversight and monitoring functions.

The lack of a focal point for Centerwide decisionmaking has several pernicious outcomes. First are high transaction costs, identified by new and existing donors and the sister institutions in the international system as a serious disincentive to working with the CGIAR. Second is the inability of the network of Centers to mobilize quickly to respond to opportunities or to position their collective competence to create opportunities in the rapidly changing context of research for development.

There is no use of modern results-based strategy and management approaches that would help CGIAR entities decide where accountability and responsibility for final results fall between production of the core components and complementary delivery components of the international public goods delivery system.

The CGIAR has attempted reform several times since the mid-1990s, with the twin aims of ensuring strategic relevance and securing adequate, stable, and predictable financing. All efforts proved largely unsuccessful. The CGIAR is once again attempting change through a highly ambitious change management initiative. The Panel considers that a successful outcome will require taking careful account of the lessons of prior efforts: a structural transformation in CGIAR governance

Centers need more resources, larger reserves, and especially more unrestricted funds, but donors are unlikely to provide them without greater assurance of strategic effectiveness and performance. Needed: a new institutional and financial structure with new tools for resource mobilization as part of a general reform package

The Panel recommends a new systemwide governance model based on nine criteria:

1. A single entry point is required to position the CGIAR in international forums and to reduce the transaction costs identified by potential funders and international institutional partners.
2. The functions of governance and management need to be differentiated and clearly separated to avoid conflicts of interest. Donors should not be involved in managing the Centers. Management and responsibility for operations should be separated from oversight.
3. Decisionmaking bodies should be empowered to take binding decisions and have commensurate authority to ensure implementation, at least in clearly circumscribed areas essential for CGIAR System functioning.
4. Governance arrangements require formal foundations—legal in the case of the Consortium—to increase legitimacy and improve effectiveness. This requires establishing rules-based membership conditions that include enforcement mechanisms.
5. Adequate and predictable financing, particularly for international public goods, is required to allow the Centers to retain a cadre of high-caliber scientists to tackle mid- and long-term scientific challenges. Predictable and adequate financing must be earned. Financing arrangements must take full account of the need for donors to demonstrate results and value for money.
6. Paris Declaration principles—alignment of developing country strategic priorities and CGIAR strategy and programs, harmonization of programmatic funding levels and reporting requirements, devolved ownership, and mutual accountability—should be applied to the CGIAR.
7. A fully independent evaluation and assessment function needs to be set up. The Science Council's role as evaluator is incompatible with its role as advisor and honest broker on scientific excellence. The two roles need to be separated.
8. The CGIAR must maintain high standards of excellence in research, while ensuring that key partners use the CGIAR outputs to achieve development impact. The apparent contradiction between focusing on scientific excellence and research achievements and giving priority to achieving development outcomes and results needs to be reconceptualized using advanced models of international public goods and results management.
9. The political viability of implementing the new governance arrangements for the CGIAR should be acceptable to the key players in the CGIAR community. A time-targeted plan to implement the proposed governance reforms should be agreed to and supported financially.

is the key precondition for the success of all other reforms.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 1. Rebalance the Center-donor partnership to sustain the CGIAR's unique contributions

A central finding of the Panel is that the 37-year partnership between Members/donors and the research Centers is a robust comparative advantage of the CGIAR. No other international arrangement rivals this common-cause partnership of development agencies and agricultural science with its nearly four decades of accumulated knowledge and social capital. This partnership should be preserved. But it needs rebalancing (box 1).

- The separate responsibilities and authorities of Members/donors and of the Centers need to be clarified and rationalized in a dual structure of a

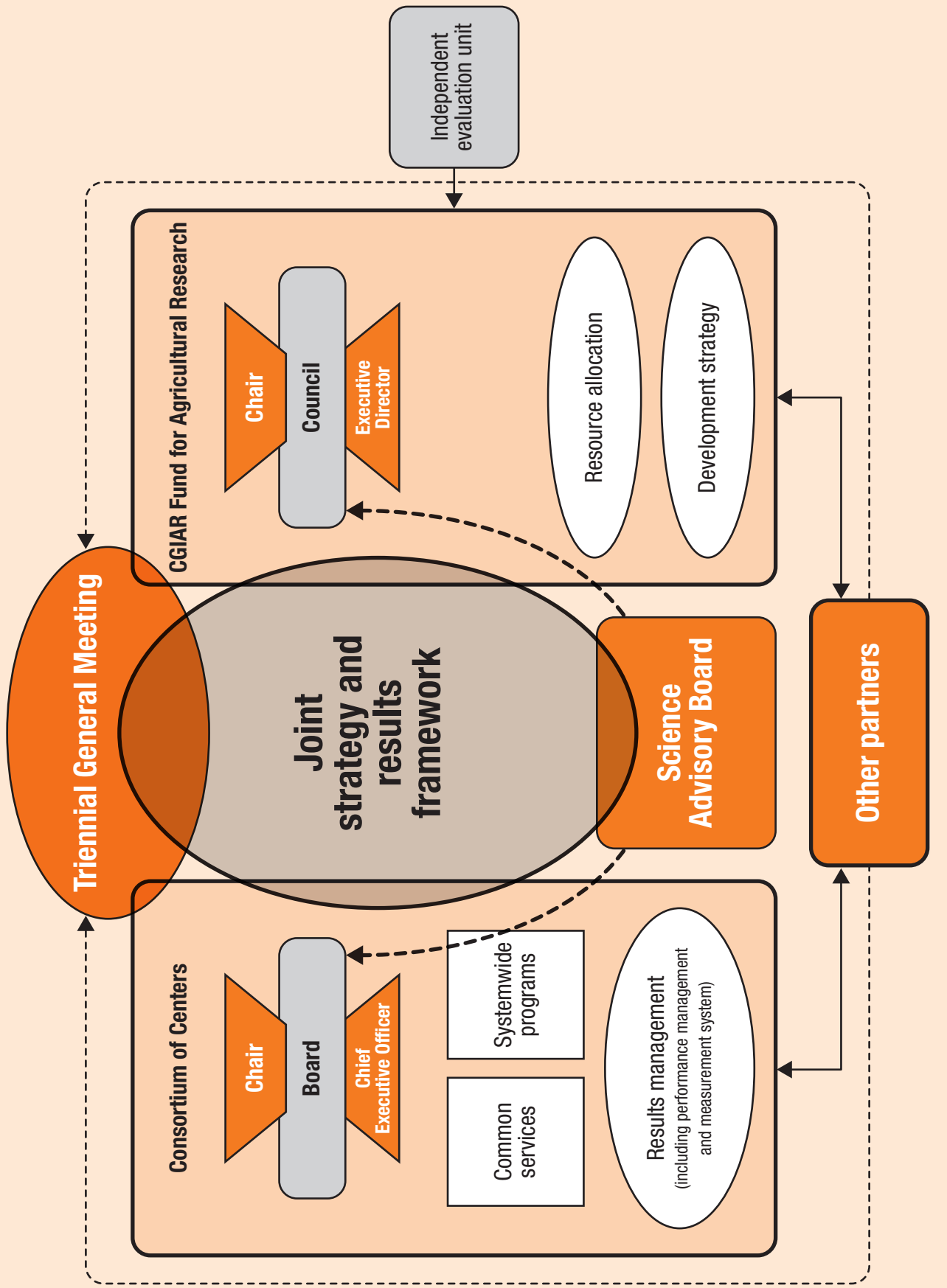
Consortium (a legal entity owned jointly by the Centers) and a CGIAR Fund (formed and managed by donors), with some bridging institutions (figure 2).

- Some common institutions of the partnership need to be maintained.

Donors need to strike a new balance between providing unrestricted resources to the Centers, achieving greater programmatic coherence in funding, and strategically targeting grants. In addition, resource allocation needs to be influenced more by Center performance. In return, the Centers need to work closely together to bring greater coherence to the network, to be more programmatic in their outlook, to make firm strategic and organizational decisions and to demonstrate cost-efficiency. Finally, the Centers cannot be held accountable for the final delivery of their products to the poor, but they do need to be part of a larger strategy and set of arrangements with

Figure 2

A rebalanced model of system governance



donors and other partners to achieve specific development-based outcomes.

After careful consideration, the Panel has concluded that four actions are vital:

1. The CGIAR System should separate governance and management functions. The roles of donors and management should be separated to avoid conflicts of interest. The management responsibility for operations should be separated from oversight.
2. The donors should establish a CGIAR Fund for Agricultural Research as a new channel for predictable, unrestricted funding to Centers and restricted funding to programs. Money should be allocated from the Fund to Centers and to programs in a rules-based manner, partly according to performance. In deciding how much grant funding to channel through the pooled Fund, the donors should keep in mind their Paris Declaration commitment to provide two-thirds of their development aid on a program rather than a project grant basis by 2010.
3. The Centers should strengthen their institutions for common action by consolidating common services, common policy and strategy, and program administration in a jointly owned Consortium.
4. Both donors and Centers should set up decisionmaking procedures based on clear authorities and shared strategic objectives. Nonbinding approaches to decisionmaking are no longer adequate for a collective enterprise that spends half a billion dollars of public money annually, resources set to increase substantially if the foregoing actions are taken.

The Panel has considered whether the recommended approach to governance would be more economical as well as more effective than the existing system. It seems clear that the true costs of governance will be less when the dysfunctions of the current system are remedied.

## **Recommendation 2. Establish a legally structured Consortium of Centers**

Building on the conclusions of prior studies and the lessons of past reform efforts, the Panel recommends establishing a new legally structured Consortium of Centers. It would be owned by the Centers, governed by a board chosen by them, and have a Chair and a Chief Executive Officer chosen through international competition. Its board would be assigned clear decisionmaking authorities, fiduciary, and due diligence accountabilities by the Centers and its decisions on all delegated matters would be binding on members. The Consortium would be rules-bound. As new, high-impact organizations appear over time, the rules should allow for new and expanded membership. It should not be a closed shop.

The Consortium would provide a single point of entry and, in partnership with the Fund, project a single coherent voice in international policy forums, a much stronger position than single Centers can occupy. The Consortium will enable the Centers to manage their common interests more coherently and strategically. In particular, it would provide an instrument for common services, program coordination and administration, and results-based management.

CGIAR Fund-supported programs should have an administrative home in the Consortium.

Many of the CGIAR's main donors will continue to expect consolidations and demonstrations of major cost-effectiveness gains over the next few years, and this will affect decisions on levels of financing. The Panel believes, therefore, that the new Consortium must address as a very high priority the reality of total governance size and costs.

To improve on past performance in specific areas, a new Consortium of Centers should:

- *Improve financial management and financial reporting.* Specifically, the Consortium should evaluate transaction costs of small grants and establish minimum grant requirements, move to full cost recovery on all projects,

increase reserve requirements to 180 days (and should not be penalized for higher reserves), immediately assess the need for capital improvements across Centers, provide more detail in financial reports on nonmember contributions, and develop annual financial statements for Challenge Programs, which should be subject to an annual independent audit.

- *Simplify the Challenge Programs to focus on Center-led consortia.* This change should not reduce the valuable involvement of external institutions in program development and implementation if it is made a condition of program award and if proposals are adequately peer reviewed. It will help make Challenge or “mega” Programs an effective tool of System strategy. Further, the Challenge Programs and Systemwide and Eco-regional Programs (SWEPs) should be integrated into a more strategic (derived from System strategy and strategic objectives) new mechanism for inter-Center programmatic research with partners. Design and management of these programmatic initiatives should be based more on what is required to achieve results and less on a portfolio of specific instruments. The Consortium of Centers could provide a mechanism for managing programs that would avoid conflicts of interest and improve financial oversight.
- Establish common services such as strategic communications, financial reporting, and results management systems, internal audit, information technology, and properly equipped human resources function. The human resources function must ensure equity in internal Consortium and Center hiring, training, and compensation and other rewards. Once established, the new function could prepare gender and diversity policies.

As the new human resources function becomes established, the Gender and Diversity Program should gradually hand over its mainstream activities (such as the staff survey) to human resources.

- Centers should develop a common strategy to protect their internally generated intellectual property and know-how, including filing their own patent applications. The CGIAR must resolve issues related to its policy of making research results publicly available. The interests of the CGIAR and developing countries must be respected, along with the interests of public sector companies. These issues have been pending for more than a decade, and the Panel recommends urgent and decisive attention.

### **Recommendation 3. Establish a CGIAR Fund for Agricultural Research**

The new CGIAR Fund for Agricultural Research would be established under a governing Council that would receive, hold, commit, and allocate financial resources assigned to it in trust. This would be principally a shareholder governing body made up of contributing members, including foundations. An option would be to assign voting shares on the basis of groupings (constituencies) to accommodate both large and smaller shareholders and other stakeholders.

The Fund would work to ensure follow-through on financial pledges, to receive and hold funds provided to the Fund, and to make funds available to the Consortium of Centers. In making funds available, it would apply the conditions and schedules agreed in multiyear financing discussions, including performance- and results-based reporting, milestones, and benchmarks. Together with the Board of the Consortium, it would be responsible for ensuring that transparency and full cost recovery are applied to all financing agreements falling outside of the Fund.

Once allocated from the CGIAR Fund to the Centers, funds should be unrestricted.

The Fund would work to ensure follow-through on financial pledges, to receive and hold funds provided to the Fund, and to make funds available to the Consortium of Centers

The World Bank should chair the new Fund and cochair strategy and replenishment-like triennial meetings with the Consortium

Financial management should be strengthened, partly by giving programs a common administrative home in the Consortium, assuming that the Consortium would have a formal Finance Committee and would be accountable to the Fund for financial management of contributions.

The key responsibilities of the Fund would be to lead funding negotiations, to maintain strong links with the development and research community on poverty reduction, and to create opportunities for complementary programs to support the science and research of the Centres. The Fund would use its development knowledge to allocate its resources to programs and Centers according to agreed criteria and rules.

The main functions to be carried by the Fund would include:

- Establishing a multiyear financing mechanism on the lines recommended in this report and based on the Monterrey principles of good donorship (adequacy and predictability of financing and mutual accountability for results). The aim should also be that such financing equal approximately two-thirds of total CGIAR financing by 2010. The CGIAR Chair would exercise collective leadership in this regard and would provide oversight for establishing the Fund.
- Approving transfers from the Fund to the Consortium based on agreed schedules, performance-based indicators, targeted milestones and reviews of the specific program proposals that would follow from the agreed strategic framework.
- Ensuring accountability and standards of due diligence over all funds held and assigned to the Consortium.

The World Bank should maintain its special relationship with the CGIAR and its affiliated Centers. It should focus its engagement on strategy, resource mobilization and allocation, and building of the substantive links between the Bank and the development community, including its own Agriculture and

Rural Development Department. The World Bank needs to disengage from operational management of the CGIAR network of Centers. The leadership of the World Bank in consultative group arrangements argues strongly that the Bank should assume the leadership of this revitalized and modernized body. The Bank's convening power would be an essential ingredient of success. The World Bank should chair the new Fund and cochair strategy and replenishment-like triennial meetings with the Consortium.

#### **Recommendation 4. Support the Consortium and CGIAR Fund with a science advisory board and an independent evaluation unit**

The Panel considered what common institutions should be maintained as part of a strong partnership between the Centers (and their joint Consortium) and the proposed Fund, concluding that there should be at least three:

- A joint strategy and results framework developed for the inaugural conference and renewed preferably as part of replenishment-like negotiations on a triennial basis.
- An independent evaluation unit, reporting to the council of the Fund, but working closely with the board of the Consortium as well.
- A committee of eminent advisors that form a science advisory board. It might be called the Science Council, as at present, or perhaps something broader if the inaugural conference decides to include anti-poverty expertise as well as science expertise.

*Joint Strategy and Results Framework:* The Panel recommends establishment of a system-wide strategic management for results framework. Strategic results frameworks are the key link between donors and Centers, the glue that holds the CGIAR System together. They should be prepared in consultation with all relevant partners, including those in charge of scientific advice and those responsible for independent evaluations.

Although Centers have put in place strategic planning, management, and performance measurement systems, these are as yet absent at the System level. In addition to guiding priority setting and resource allocation, jointly developed systemwide strategic management for results frameworks provide the means for grounding the mutual accountability between donors and Centers on indicators, facts, and evidence. These, in turn, increase transparency and allow performance assessment of both parties in achieving commonly defined objectives and results. Together with an international public goods delivery system approach, these frameworks inform the design and implementation of partnerships and lead to an effective division of labor between Centers and their partners. They establish clear lines of accountability for activities that are directly under Center control, and of responsibility for influencing partners in those they do not control.

The results framework would be the basis for Performance Contracts between the Consortium and the Fund, against which implementation would be managed and performance monitored. As *managing* for results is essentially a responsibility of *management*, the Consortium should take the lead on performance management and measurement once new systems are established. The Fund should develop its own results framework against which to judge its performance and report to the Consortium on its effectiveness.

*Science Advisory Board:* This would take up those functions of the current Science Council that are solidly service based and that aim to furnish the Consortium of Centers with the highest caliber of scientific counsel, including the results of foresight exercises to keep the work of the rebalanced partnership “ahead of the curve” on the needs of science for development. This body would provide the CGIAR System with scientific and technical advice and would be a broker to mobilize science and technology for agricultural development.

As required by the Consortium, it would also provide advice in the formulation of

strategy and program proposals. It would not, however, carry out performance evaluations, as is the current practice of the Science Council. This is at fundamental variance with accepted best practice, as it has placed the Science Council in a conflicted position, whereby it provides scientific and programmatic advice, mandates programmatic norms and standards, and evaluates performance arising from its advice but without accountability for the performance.

The Panel recommends that the strategic role of the current Science Council, embodied in the former activities of the Science Council’s Standing Panel on Priorities and Strategies and the Standing Panel on Mobilizing Science, be made the principle role of the future Science Advisory Board. This body should remain an independent advisory body that provides advice to the Consortium of Centers. Its advice will also be useful to the donor Fund, but the Science Advisory Board should not in any way be an instrument of the Fund to organize or conduct monitoring and evaluation of the Centers or Consortium.

A future role for the Science Advisory Board should include strategic studies on issues of potential importance to the CGIAR and to global agricultural research for development. Relative to current Science Council activity, these studies need to be increased and made more timely in their delivery. Most importantly, they need to be developed in consultation with the Centers, with a clear initial understanding of how their results will be used.

The Panel also recommends that the current focus of the Science Council’s Standing Panel on Impact Assessment remain as an activity of the science advisory body as self-assessment assistance. Further, the Panel stresses the need to better assess the impact of all research areas, improving methods and levels of assessment for natural resource management and policy-oriented research and for capacity building, and understanding the contribution of all these research activities to the delivery of specific strategic objectives. In this context, the Panel also recommends

As managing for results is essentially a responsibility of management, the Consortium should take the lead on performance management and measurement once new systems are established

The Panel stresses the need to better assess the impact of all research areas, improving methods and levels of assessment for natural resource management and policy-oriented research and for capacity building, and understanding the contribution of all these research activities to the delivery of specific strategic objectives

continued effort to understand the impact of CGIAR research on poverty reduction. There is a particular need to focus on understanding the impacts of CGIAR research in Africa, given the comparatively low historical impact and recent investment and promising outputs. Finally, the Panel recommends that future impact assessment make efforts to accurately assess environmental, gender, and other indirect effects of agricultural research for development. There are some impact assessment activities that are most appropriately undertaken by the Centers themselves, and the links between the science advisory body and the Consortium regarding impact assessment would need to be worked out in more detail.

*Independent Evaluation Unit:* The Panel also recommends that an Independent Evaluation Unit be established to conduct systems reviews and to evaluate progress on the Joint Strategy and nested Center and program strategies. That is, as well as conducting overall systems evaluations, it would also take on the Science Council's current role in managing external evaluations of CGIAR activity, including Centers and Challenge Programs. The Consortium of Centers will need to develop their own capacity for results-based performance management and measurement.<sup>2</sup>

The Independent Evaluation Unit would report to the Council of the Fund. The Evaluation Director would develop an evaluation strategy and work plans with the input of the Consortium, the Fund, and partners for tracking performance of the Consortium and the Fund toward the agreed strategic objectives and desired programmatic outcomes and impacts defined in the strategy and the results framework.

It would follow donor agreed guidelines for evaluating global programs. It would work to reduce transaction costs for the Centers by working toward joint evaluations with donors. It would report triennially on its own results and yearly on the evaluation results of the products set out in its multiyear strategy and on the implementation of the previous

study recommendation. The program would also cover "process evaluations" to cover process effectiveness as well as investment effectiveness.

#### **Recommendation 5. The Consortium and the Fund adopt a gender strategy based on accountability for integrating gender in the work of partnerships.**

The Panel recommends that IFPRI, on behalf of the Consortium, develop by 2009 a gender strategy and results framework for inclusion in the new, overarching CGIAR strategy and results management process. IFPRI, along with the Participatory Research and Gender Analysis program, would establish an inter-Center and stakeholder task force to develop Systemwide strategic objectives for gender integration in Center research nested under each of the CGIAR strategic objectives. The task force would review guidelines for all management and accountability instruments to include indicators of achievement of the proposed gender strategy.

The Panel recommends that one of the first mega programs to be developed address the productivity, production, and sustainability issues facing women in agriculture and the special health and nutrition needs of women and girls.

The Panel also recommends expansion of the Gender and Diversity African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) Program into a global scientific capacity-building program for women and Group 2 nationals. Through a joint venture with universities in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries and with centers of excellence in developing countries, this would increase the number of female and Group 2 nationals who earn PhDs in agricultural science, economics, and other agriculture-related disciplines (including health). The Centers could assist Gender and Diversity Program work with donors to match universities and CGIAR Centers where postgraduate research for development can be undertaken and supported.

**Recommendation 6. The Consortium and the CGIAR Fund together take a more strategic approach to partnerships with other actors in the production and delivery of international public goods**

The CGIAR cannot function effectively as a component of an international public goods delivery system in the absence of robust partnerships that ensure production and scaled up application of public goods. Current ad hoc, short-term approaches to partnerships are unsustainable. The results, relationships, and requirements for strategic partnerships need to be made explicit and operationalized within a results-based performance framework.

- Within the balanced partnership model, the Panel recommends as the highest priority for partnership development in the CGIAR, that partnerships be approached as integral components of a medium-term strategy and results framework.
- The Panel recommends that the CGIAR donor community and the governments of developing countries approach the needs of Africa systemically by assuring adequate provision for institution and capacity building in the partnership among CGIAR, NARS, and advanced research institutes.
- The Panel also recommends the establishment of a separate financing facility as a contingency fund for partnership opportunities, not envisaged in the strategic framework. This would be available, for example, to meet the short-term financing needs of a NARS partnership to test a promising new technology or to gain rapid and timely access to scientific equipment available only in an advanced research institute.
- The Panel recommends a facilitated high-level dialogue with Chatham House rules among representatives of civil society organizations, the private sector, representatives of Centers and the Consortium, and independent

experts on intellectual property rights. A multistakeholder dialogue can be used to achieve greater clarity on the nexus between intellectual property rights and public agricultural research.

- The Panel recommends the CGIAR continue to apply its new policy for building partnerships with nongovernmental organizations. The systematic nature and concrete steps proposed in the policy should be applied and tested over time. The Panel accords particular importance in this regard to conducting regular three-year evaluations of CGIAR–nongovernmental organization partnerships. At least the first such evaluation should be conducted on an independent basis.

**Moving forward with a balanced partnership**

From the Members’ perspective, in accepting a rebalanced partnership, Members would achieve four benefits:

- First, Members would have an instrument, the Fund, to achieve the quantum advance in the funding of research in agriculture and natural resource management that climate change and the current crisis in food prices demand.
- Second, strategic allocation of pooled funds would enable a programmatic approach to investment in agricultural and natural resource management research for development.
- Third, authorities would be clarified and accountability enhanced.
- Fourth, members would be freed from management responsibilities, which would be assumed by the joint Consortium of the Centers. This would be a significant gain in time and energy. Members would be able to focus their energies on development strategy, resource allocation and

Members would be able to focus their energies on development strategy, resource allocation and oversight—matters that are more important and much more appropriate to them than micromanagement of Center network operations

The Centers would “up their game” by focusing on large regional and global challenges. In doing so, their stature and relevance would increase in the eyes of the international community

oversight—matters that are more important and much more appropriate to them than micromanagement of Center network operations.

Members would accept the loss of some powers in return for gains that are more important to them. They would:

- Give up their quasi management of Center affairs.
- Face a stronger, more confident and probably more assertive network or partnership of Centers.
- Relinquish some sovereignty because financial contributions that were previously direct from individual Members to Centers would now be partly shared in the pooled Fund. But members would still exercise strategic sovereignty through their agreed resource allocation framework.

In summary, the Members would be relieved of management responsibilities and the conflicts of interest that attend them. Instead, they would have an appropriate instrument for results-based resource allocation (the Fund). The pooled Fund would enable Members to institute a results-based framework, within which they could exercise due diligence on development “value for money” from the Centers. They would be working within a governance structure more in accord with the spirit of the Paris and Monterey Declarations, which encourage harmonization and encourage Members to focus on strategy, resource allocation, and oversight rather than on the ownership of projects and operations.

From the Centers’ perspective, in accepting the balanced partnership model, the Centers would gain certain benefits:

- The Centers would “up their game” by focusing on large regional and global challenges. In doing so, their stature and relevance would increase in the eyes of the international community.
- They would have access to a major new source of unrestricted and restricted money through a new pooled Fund with the objective of substantially

increasing the total funding of the Centers and Programs within the first commitment and pledging period.

- They would enhance their comparative strategic advantage, not only by the capabilities made possible by substantial incremental funding, but also by having a single entry point and single voice in international forums. The brand and coherence of the network or partnership would be enhanced.
- They would be served by common services owned by them.
- They would have a stronger role in the joint management of programs.

But accepting the rebalanced partnership model of governance for the common good and mission would involve tradeoffs for the Centers:

- They would cede some important decisionmaking powers to the joint Consortium.
- They would accept that much of the flow of unrestricted and restricted (programmatic) funds would come through the CGIAR Fund, rather than directly from individual members, and that it would be allocated by members strategically, partly according to Center performance and program performance.
- They would take more responsibility, individually and collectively, for financial risk management, and there would be a lower probability of a bailout if a Center had serious financial difficulties.
- They would pay significant fees and levies to the joint Consortium, to cover its operations, including joint services to the Centers and administering programs. These expenditures might be partly (or mostly) compensated by transfers to the Centers of funds that previously have gone directly to pay for system management. But there might be significant incremental costs to the Centers.

In summary, authorities and responsibilities in the new model of governance would be clarified and rebalanced to the long-term benefit of all parties.

### Transition arrangements

There is now a window of opportunity for the reformation of the CGIAR. The current world food price crisis demands immediate action. Therefore the Panel recommends that funding be made available to exploit existing programming and to accelerate program design to fully engage past investments and to engage cutting edge science.

If the CGIAR and the Centers decided to move to a partnership structure similar to the one outlined here, the Panel recommends an eight-month transition to bring the new structures into existence. The process would entail two six-person task forces, one led by the World Bank to propose the details of the Fund and the other led by a chairperson designated by the Centers to formulate the details for legal incorporation in a jurisdiction that it would determine in consultation with the Centers. The task forces would present their proposals to the inaugural conference for the launch of the compact.

The Panel believes that all aspects of the new governance system cannot be decided in the absence of serious discussions between the Member/donors and the Centers. In this spirit the Panel recommends an inaugural conference to reach agreement on a new reform compact for the rebalanced partnership and the requirements for its implementation.

In the future a triennial assembly of all stakeholders would be organized and co-chaired by the chairs of the Fund and the Consortium. Its purpose would be to present and seek feedback on strategies and programs and to review all matters of interest to the well-being of the CGIAR partnership. This could also seek to bring together the leaders of the leading organizations concerned with agricultural research and development, food security, and the interface between agriculture

and natural resource sustainability and major international research networks.

### Getting on with it

Real progress cannot come one institution at a time. The CGIAR Centers need to lift their partnership game at all levels and with the private sector and nongovernmental organizations. But they cannot reform on their own. Nor can they address global challenges without institutional supports from their global partners. The next step is for the governments responsible for the five organizations comprising the core entities of the international agriculture architecture to review the recent evaluations of the International Fund for Agriculture Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Bank, the World Food Programme, and the CGIAR to determine how these important institutions can be better supported to work more effectively within more nimble, mission-directed, and integrated international structures.

Within this broad reform agenda, the CGIAR must enhance its global leadership. Science (including that for policy and institutional innovations) will be at the heart of faster productivity growth, adaptation to climate change and the use of scarce water. The priority challenges are becoming more transnational in scope, putting a premium on regional and global collective action and on the development of international public goods.

The Panel's main message is that change at the CGIAR is essential—and possible. Get on with it.

### Notes

1. Nested frameworks from overarching strategy to Center and program strategy would guide the achievement of agreed strategic objectives. The results systems should first and foremost serve the management of the Centers to guide staff and secondly to demonstrate development impact achieved with partners. Efforts should be made to reduce reporting at each level of the system to just what is needed at the next to make decisions.
2. Governance is making sure an organization is doing the right things; management is making sure the organization is doing them right.

The Panel believes that all aspects of the new governance system cannot be decided in the absence of serious discussions between the Member/donors and the Centers. In this spirit the Panel recommends an inaugural conference to reach agreement on a new reform compact for the rebalanced partnership and the requirements for its implementation