

INTERNATIONAL CENTERS WEEK

October 28 - November 1, 1991

Washington, D.C.

Agenda Item 4

**Report of the CGIAR Committee
of Board Chairs of the Consultative Group**

Fred Hutchinson, Chair, CIAT

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Committee of Board Chairs (CBC) has been very active in the period since we last reported to you at ICW 90 last year.

We have held two plenary sessions, in Paris and in Washington, the first in May and the second for two days last week in Washington. At the latter meeting we welcomed the Board Chairs from the three new Centers in the CGIAR System. I am pleased to report that we had perfect attendance and that the discussion was further enriched by the diversity of mission introduced by the new members.

We held a joint session with TAC, in company with the Directors General, last week here in Washington. During that meeting we focussed primarily on the CGIAR Priorities Paper. We took that opportunity to thank the TAC members, and in particular the Chairman, Mr. McCalla for the perseverance and sound judgement they have exhibited throughout this entire exercise.

Finally, the CBC had observers at the TAC 54, TAC 55, and TAC 56 and at the CGIAR Mid-Term Meeting in May in Paris.

Participation in these meetings has given us an opportunity to state our views concerning the many issues facing the System. We have attempted to state these views as clearly as possible, both publicly and privately. We thank the members and staff of the Secretariat and the TAC for their willingness to listen, and to respond.

The composition of the CBC remains more stable than in the past. This year only one member leaves the CBC after this meeting, Nicholas Mumba of IITA. We expect this will strengthen the role of the CBC within the CGIAR because some continuity of effort is essential.

There are several items arising from our meetings which I would like to bring to your attention at this time. Some of these had their genesis in prior years, while others are relatively new.

First, let me state how pleased the CBC is with its maturing relationship with the Directors General. After all, collectively we represent the combined wisdom, concerns, understanding, and excitement of the Centers. Collectively we are best prepared to interact within the CGIAR System to represent them. This past week we spent part of one day in a very productive discussion of many issues facing us in the future. One of these topics I will further elaborate upon later in my presentation.

Second, the CBC desires to express its support for the priorities outlined in the

Priorities Paper produced by TAC. We find the draft currently under consideration to be responsive to many of the concerns we have brought forward in the process. In fact, we are ready to accept that process of prioritization to be essentially completed. Our sense of urgency is much stronger for the development of a strategy to accompany these priorities.

Third, the CBC and the CDC spent most of our time together sharing a strong concern for the necessity of a "new" strategy for the CGIAR System, one which more clearly defines where we are going. We do not envision this as another "review" of the System, but rather a whole new strategy for the future. We believe that strategy should focus primarily, if not exclusively, on two components; one, a strategy that defines and targets the System's mandate and, two, a strategy for funding the System adequately to meet its mandate.

We believe time is of the essence in initiating such a strategy formulation process. We, representing the Centers in partnership with the Directors General, feel strongly that we should play a significant role in framing such a strategy. We have already identified those individuals within our two groups who are ready to represent us if a "steering committee" is created to lead the development of a new System strategy. We assume such a "committee" would include among others, members from the Secretariat, the TAC, the co-sponsors, the donors, and the NARS. The exact nature of the membership is not our primary concern, but we are very concerned that such a process get underway immediately, and that it be completed by ICW 92. We realize this is a very short time frame, especially for the processes within this System. For that reason we would suggest the strategy formulation be facilitated by some group selected specifically for that purpose, rather than adding it to the already over-burdened TAC and/or Secretariat offices.

The relevance of the strategy brought forward could be assured by creating a "steering committee" to guide the process. In this manner the wisdom of all components of the CGIAR system would be involved.

Let me be clear that the CBC is not requesting the creation of a strategic plan for the CGIAR System. What we are requesting is a clear statement of strategy which can be used to guide us into the future. If a strategic plan were ultimately to emerge, so be it! First we need a strategy.

Fourth, the CBC members share a strong concern with the CDC members and the TAC in the high opportunity costs associated with external reviews, strategic plans and mid-term plans. It is difficult to obtain precise information regarding these costs for any particular Center, but we are convinced the sum of direct and indirect costs, including opportunity costs, is very large. We wish to assure you that we continue to appreciate the need for a comprehensive review and planning process, but we urge for a continuing effort to streamline the process. Donor concerns must

be respected in this process because they are our greatest allies in urging for greater support for the System. What is needed is modification of the existing review and planning process which integrates the needs of everyone and yet simplifies the process. We realize this may be an optimistic viewpoint but nevertheless it is one we continue to feel strongly is feasible.

The CBC does not have specific recommendations to make to the System concerning the issue. However, we support the CDC and TAC in their ongoing dialogue on this matter. We feel the CDC is in the best position to make specific recommendations and to negotiate for an improved process. We do not see this as a bureaucratic debate, but rather a potentially serious impediment to scientific productivity in the Centers, and therefore in the System. For that reason we are compelled to bring it to your attention.

Fifth, I am pleased to report to you, and particularly to the donors, that the Centers have responded aggressively to the consensus expressed regarding evaluation and tenuring of Directors General in the System. At ICW 90 we reported to you that a general policy statement on this topic had been approved by the CBC. In brief that statement defined specific terms of appointment for five years, with substantive review before the end of the first term. It further stated that two terms should normally be the maximum, with exceptions possible under unusual circumstances.

I am pleased to report to you today that all Center Boards of Trustees, including the new Centers in the System, have in the last year accepted this policy. True, there are some variations, such as one which will have three, three year terms, but we find that consistent with the policy. In fact, it is an excellent example of the strength of this System. We agree on the right for individual expression within the larger goal.

Sixth, the CBC agrees with the priority given by the System for continuing improvement of the performance of Center Boards of Trustees. To that end we are encouraged by the creation and implementation of the Candidate Information Service (CIS). We believe this program should be reviewed within two or three years to assure its long term effectiveness, but for the present we remain optimistic regarding its effectiveness.

Further, we appreciate the excellent assistance the CG Secretariat has provided in orientation and evaluation mechanisms utilized by the Centers.

Finally, I wish to report to you that the CBC and CDC have agreed to repeat the 1988 comparator-based study of the Directors General salaries and benefits. We have found the information from the earlier study as we go forward with recruitment and employment of a new generation of Directors General. Unfortunately, the data are now out-of-date and thus our decision to repeat the earlier study. It will be

conducted by Dr. Lowell Hardin, who also conducted the previous study. We recognize the sensitivity of such information, but are encouraged by the high level of confidentiality achieved the last time.

In summary, it has been a good year within the CBC and within the CGIAR System. New Centers have emerged, the Centers and their faculty and staff continue to be totally dedicated to what they are doing in spite of many external pressures upon them, and evidence of research productivity abounds. The CBC continues to be proud of being part of this System. Therefore, we are deeply committed to its future and we urge for a process to develop a strategy for the future. We sense it is a propitious time for such an undertaking. Do you?

Thank you.