

(09/09/05)

### **Summary of Discussions at IITA-WARDA Meeting, September 8, 2005**

1. In response to a suggestion by the CGIAR, CGIAR Chair Ian Johnson invited the Board Chairs and Directors General of IITA and WARDA for a meeting at the CGIAR Secretariat in Washington DC to discuss the recommendations relating to West and Central Africa by the CGIAR Task Forces (TF) on Programmatic and Structural/Organizational Alignment.
2. The IITA-WARDA meeting took place on September 8, 2005. The following participated:

Mortimer Neufville, IITA Board Chair, Bryan Harvey, Incoming IITA Board Chair, Peter Hartmann, IITA Director General, Gaston Grenier, WARDA Board Chair, Kanayo Nwanze, WARDA Director General, Charles di Leva, World Bank Chief Counsel, Maurizio Ragazzi, World Bank Senior Counsel, Ian Johnson, CGIAR Chair, Francisco Reifschneider, CGIAR Director, Selcuk Ozgediz, CGIAR Secretariat, and Ernest Corea, CGIAR Secretariat.
3. The CGIAR Executive Council endorsed the TF recommendations on May 11-12, and the ExCo's endorsement was subsequently approved by the CGIAR.
4. Participants from the two Centers reported at the Sept. 8 meeting that the Board Chairs of IITA and WARDA met in Ottawa on June 17 to consider a stepwise approach to implementation of TF recommendations. The possible appointment of members common to the Boards of Trustees of both Centers, and of interlocking directorates, were among the matters discussed. It was agreed that further discussions would be carried out by a joint meeting of the Centers' Executive Committees.
5. Following are the main points that emerged from the Sept. 8 discussion:
  - (i) In the past both Centers had appointed common Board members. This practice may be renewed, with a greater number of common members than before.
  - (ii) Both Centers had also engaged in discussions in the past on consolidating programmatic elements and services. Current support from the leadership and membership of the CGIAR System provides an impetus for these discussions to be renewed. Joint activities resulting from such discussions can serve as building blocks for the two Centers to establish closer collaboration and integration in the future.
  - (iii) Matters for future discussion between the two Centers may include:
    - Appointment of members common to the Boards of Trustees of both Centers;
    - Joint Executive Committee meetings;
    - Appointment of a Joint Nominating Committee, and the creation of a profile of Board members of both Centers;
    - Tangible programmatic collaboration;
    - Joint training programs;
    - Joint services.

(iv) As advised by World Bank legal counsel present at the meeting, based upon the information on hand to this point, these revived activities are likely to be achievable, *prima facie*, without amending the legal instruments that govern the functioning of both Centers.

(v) The IITA and WARDA participants at the meeting acknowledged that support and guidance from World Bank legal counsel have been extremely valuable, and expressed their hope that this contribution will continue.

(vi) Similar efforts by other Centers and the System to build synergies that are mutually strengthening would make the entire exercise more acceptable to the staff of IITA and WARDA. These two Centers do not wish to undertake changes in isolation from other Centers.

(vii) The Executive Committees of IITA and WARDA will meet jointly in Paris on October 1 and 2. They will review current developments and are expected to appoint a Working Group to recommend next steps. The Executive Committees will issue appropriate guidelines and a time frame for the Working Group to make specific proposals for programmatic and organizational alignment.

6. A brief report on the outcome of the joint meeting of Executive Committees will be presented to the CGIAR Executive Council in Stockholm on October 19-20. In December, IITA and WARDA will report to AGM05 on the outcome of their discussions. The CGIAR Secretariat will support the activities of the process of realignment.

7. IITA and WARDA reported that good progress had been made on the regional MTPs.

**Summary Report of the Joint meeting of the Executive Committees of the Boards  
of Trustees of IITA and WARDA  
Paris, France; 1-2 October, 2005**

The Executive Committees of the Boards of Trustees of IITA and WARDA held a joint meeting on October 1 and 2, 2005 at the CIRAD office in Paris to discuss a plan of action for implementation of the SSA Task Force recommendation: “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,” with specific reference to West and Central Africa. The representative of the French Government in his introductory statement referred to the meeting as a historic event.

The main aim of this joint meeting was to explore opportunities for collaboration and put in place mechanisms for alignment of programs and services towards the ultimate goal of reducing poverty and hunger in Africa, maximizing efficiencies and eliminating overlaps where possible.

This meeting was the culmination of meetings held earlier in the year, first in Penang in May 2005 between the Board Chairs and Directors General of the two centers, a second in Canada (July 2005) between the Board Chairs and IITA Chair-designate, and a third meeting organized by the CG Secretariat in Washington between the CGIAR Chair, CGIAR Director, the World Bank legal counsel and the DGs, Board Chairs and IITA Chair-designate on 8 September 2005.

The meeting was conducted in a spirit of openness and with a genuine willingness to work together to make effective progress. Both centers established at the outset that any decisions would not only consider the potential impact on the ultimate beneficiaries of the centers work but also on center staff. In that context both centers expressed the view that their goal could be best achieved if decision-making is close to where the action takes place, in this particular case in West and Central Africa.

The centers discussed the background to the task force recommendations beginning with the System review of 1998 and recommendations of the Change Management Design Team. They concluded that over and above the reasons provided by the Task Forces for consolidation of activities in sub-Saharan Africa there is also a need for putting in place mechanisms that provided greater transparency and clarity for the system’s investors.

In setting the stage for defining the next steps, the discussions and points made at the September 8 meeting were reemphasized in a videoconference between the two committees and the World Bank legal counsel. The joint activities already under discussion and being proposed by the two centers were achievable *prima facie*, without amendments to the constitutions of both centers. Also the WARDA Council of Ministers concluded that “WARDA should keep its identity and autonomy while increasing its relations with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Centers, such as the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA).” Other background to the Executive Committee’s decisions was the request by the NARS, contained in the Task Force Report, for programmatic alignment in

West and Central and East and Southern Africa, to bring the expertise of all centers to bear into two entities for each of the two regions.

The two centers felt that applying the process begun for West and Central Africa globally across all regions would best serve the CG.

Against this background the Executive Committees of IITA and WARDA propose:

1. That IITA and WARDA form the initial nucleus in a West and Central Africa entity, consolidating the activities of the two centers in program, training and service areas. The entity will offer a focal point in West and Central Africa to incorporate the operations of other CG center partners, who will be represented in the entity, which will work closely with the SROs, FARA and the NARS and other players active in agricultural research in the West and Central Africa region.

The Executive Committees' see as its vision for the future, a West African entity that consists of a core cluster of CGIAR research centers working in concert to serve African agriculture in West and Central Africa without loss of autonomy and identity, positioning itself for growth and for attracting additional resources.

2. To appoint board members common to both the IITA and WARDA Boards to facilitate the establishment of this joint entity and in the spirit of achieving greater efficiency and communication. The benefits of increased knowledge of the respective goals and activities at the Board level were deemed to outweigh the disadvantages of common Board membership. This decision will be reflected in the centers' policy and legal instruments and confirmed by the bodies as required under their constitutions. The common Board members will facilitate the implementation and monitoring of the initiative and ensure its success and acceptability to donors and partners.

Common Board members will be required to operate in good faith, and in an open and transparent manner. Conflict of interest issues that might occur must be articulated and addressed at the outset and instruments to help address these issues will be developed.

Since common Board members will be appointed as vacancies occur at both centers, it is proposed that existing members be identified to serve this function in the interim.

3. To establish a joint Nominating Committee consisting of two members of each of the centers' Nominating Committees that include the Nominating Committee Chairs. This joint Nominating Committee will be responsible for developing its terms of reference, which include the development and approval of rules of procedure, building of profiles and nominating common board members.
4. To strengthen the Joint Working Group established by the two centers in May 2005 charged with the responsibility for identifying concrete areas for collaboration in research, training and administration, by appointing 2 Board members from each center to serve on the Joint Working Group.

5. The Joint Working Group will provide a progress report on the collaborative activities that should be pursued with a timetable for implementation to the IITA Board (February 2006) and the WARDA Board (March 2006).
6. To gradually expand the Joint Working Group to include representatives of other centers and partners active in agricultural research in the West and Central Africa region, building on initiatives already underway by center scientists WARDA/IITA leadership.
7. Governance of the regional Medium-Term Plans will be entrusted to the new West and Central African entity under the leadership of WARDA and IITA

Under the leadership of WARDA a draft Medium-Term plan for the region has been developed after extensive interaction with CORAF. Further development of the joint MTP for the subregion is to be undertaken at a meeting in Accra 26 and 27 October. The task is to ensure that the CGIAR work in Africa is in harmony with the regional priorities of West and Central Africa and at the same time maintains the centers global responsibility of producing international public goods.

8. The next joint meeting of the Executive Committees of the IITA and WARDA Boards will be held in September 2006.
9. WARDA and IITA Board members will be invited to attend each other's future Board meetings as observers.
10. Regular joint meetings of the IITA and WARDA Boards are envisaged in the near future in order to enhance the responsibility for joint monitoring of the implementation of the initiative and ensuring its success and acceptability to donors and partners

IITA/WARDA  
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