

Meeting of the Donor Support Group for the CGIAR Gender Staffing Program

**1998 CGIAR Mid-Term Meeting
Naoum Plaza Hotel, Brasilia, Brazil
Wednesday, May 27, 1998, 7:00 – 8:30am**

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR GENDER STAFFING IN THE CGIAR:
RECOMMENDATIONS OF AN INTER-CENTER CONSULTATION**

Summary

The Inter-Center Consultation recommended that the CGIAR continue with its focused efforts to address gender staffing issues while incrementally broadening the scope to include additional staff diversity issues, such as race, culture, and ethnicity. A system-level CGIAR Gender and Diversity Program should be developed, building on the achievements of the Gender Staffing Program. The goal should be to enhance the Centers' capacity to pursue their missions and strategic objectives through: 1) strengthening recruitment of high quality staff from the global pool of women and other diverse identity groups; and 2) developing work cultures, practices, and systems that leverage the contributions of diverse staff to enhance equity and organizational effectiveness. The Program should support Center initiatives with analytical and technical inputs, knowledge and skill development, and targeted resources. The Program should be Center-driven and mechanisms established to ensure Center ownership. To foster organizational change, priority attention should be given to revitalizing leadership commitment to addressing gender and staff diversity; fortifying skills, knowledge, and roles of change agents within the centers; strengthening accountability mechanisms; and providing targeted resources to support gender and diversity initiatives.

Background

The CGIAR Gender Staffing Program was initiated in 1991 to help the Centers to attract and retain highly qualified women scientists and professionals, and to create work environments that support the productivity, career development, and job satisfaction of both women and men. Program efforts have supported the Centers in five areas: recruitment, spouse employment, leadership and management development, gender issues in the workplace, and information dissemination.

Funding for the current phase of the Gender Staffing Program is coming to an end in 1998. The CGIAR members supporting this effort, the senior managers of the Centers, the CGIAR Secretariat, and the Program Leaders recommended that the Centers come together to determine the next steps for gender staffing in the CGIAR. In response, the Gender Staffing Program and ISNAR jointly organized an Inter-Center Consultation on Gender Staffing: Lessons Learned and Future Directions from April 28-30, 1998 at ISNAR headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands.

This meeting of 25 senior managers and scientists from across the CGIAR System sought to take stock of achievements, lessons learned, and challenges faced; to deepen their collective understanding of gender issues in organizations and the leverage points for change; and to identify strategies and priorities for future action. Four distinguished external resource persons from Germany, India, Norway and the United States drew participants' attention to cutting-edge research and management approaches to gender and organizational change from different parts of the world. A professional facilitator directed the event, to ensure an inclusive, efficient, and highly interactive process.

Achievements in Gender Staffing and Remaining Challenges

Significant progress has been made in terms of representation of women at the Centers. Since 1991, the number of female internationally-recruited staff has increased by 23%, as the relative proportion of women among IRS increased from 12% to 16%. In contrast, the percentage of women among nationally-recruited scientists and professionals has increased from 18% to 45%. There has been a modest increase in the representation of women in leadership and management roles. Women now comprise 20% of Board members and 10% of the middle and senior managers in the centers. One point of concern is that the annual average attrition rate for internationally-recruited women is higher than that for men (15% compared to 12%), particularly at the managerial level (14% compared to 9%).¹

The quantitative picture indicates that while significant progress has been made, efforts to increase the participation of women across all levels and functions in the CG System need to continue. The representation of women in international posts is still well below the 25% level of estimated supply and the 35% level that research indicates is necessary for a minority group to be to have a voice and influence in shaping the work and work environment of an organization.²

The Centers have also begun to systematically incorporate the knowledge, tools, and strategies for creating a gender equitable work environment into the fabric of their policies, management systems, and work practices. Prior to the Consultation, each Center used a common framework to systematically review and assess its own strengths, achievements, innovations and challenges in gender staffing. Outcomes from this exercise, as well as from the on-going monitoring by the Gender Staffing Program, were aggregated to give a picture of the state of gender staffing and organizational change in the CGIAR with respect to recruitment, parity in career development, and staff retention and supportive work environments.

- Recruitment efforts are clearly reaching more women. The average percentage of applications from women for international posts is now 14% rather than 4% in 1990 and appointment rates have averaged at 25%. However, the Centers still need to be more proactive if they are to compete

¹ Merrill-Sands, Deborah. (1997). *1997 CGIAR Human Resources Survey: International Staffing at the CGIAR Centers with a Focus on Gender*. CGIAR Gender Program Working Paper, No. 17. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank – CGIAR Secretariat.

² Kanter, Rosebeth Moss. (1977). *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York: Basic Books; Yoder, Janice (1991). "Rethinking Tokenism: Looking Beyond the Numbers", *Gender and Society*, vol. 5, No. 2, June 1991, PP 178-192.

effectively in the international market for top quality staff -- both men and women. Centers' self-assessments indicate that they need to give more attention and resources to mobilizing mechanisms and professional networks for "casting the net widely" during international searches; ensure that systematic and transparent policies and procedures are used in selection; and enhance staff's skills for interviewing candidates in an effective and gender sensitive manner.

- Policies and practices to ensure parity in career achievement and opportunities have received limited attention and need fuller development and implementation. Management development training for women in the centers has been very successful, but representation of women among middle and senior managers remains low. In particular, greater attention needs to be given to performance evaluation procedures, developing transparent criteria and systems for promotion, and management training.
- Centers' ability to retain high quality staff and tap their fullest productivity depends on the quality of the work environment. Feedback from the centers suggests that more attention needs to be given to enhancing skills for managing a diverse work force, strengthening skills and mechanisms for collaborative R&D, supporting dual-career couples, improving communications across the hierarchy, defining reasonable workloads, managing time pressures, and developing policies and practices which help staff better integrate their work and personal lives.

In summary, the 1998 review of the status of gender staffing indicates that most Centers have recognized the benefits of addressing gender staffing issues. They have made important strides towards creating organizational environments that both enhance their ability to fulfill their missions and harness the wealth of skills, perspectives, and knowledge that both women and men bring to the workplace. But these gains are fragile and the organizational learning and knowledge is only beginning to be institutionalized.

Representation of women has increased, but the Centers have yet to reach the point where women, alongside men, are full and active participants in the decision-making processes that shape the goals, the strategies, the work, and the work environments of the centers. While good progress has been made on identifying best practices for formal policies and management systems, adoption and implementation remain variable across the centers.

Action research on gender issues in the workplace in three centers has led to improved understanding of the key elements in work cultures and practices that create hospitable and supportive work environments for both men and women as well as enhance organization performance. Yet, more learning and work needs to be done on bringing about sustained organizational change aimed at promoting gender equity and increased organizational effectiveness. In particular, renewed efforts are needed to revitalize leadership and management commitment to creating work environments supportive of gender diverse staff. And, continued investment needs to be made in strengthening the skills and knowledge of the internal change agents who are responsible for guiding and promoting effective organizational change.

Strategy for the Future

Building on the conclusions reached from the collaborative "taking stock" exercise, representatives at the consultation explored strategic options for further work on gender staffing in the CG System (in terms of

scope, priorities, and institutional mechanisms) and developed the key elements of a future strategy. A consensus-building process was used to ensure the active engagement of all participants and their full support for and commitment to the resulting recommendations.

The recommendations for the future strategy are summarized below.

- *Vision.* Twenty-first century science will demand a twenty-first century workplace where women and men from diverse regions of the world are fully and equally empowered to do their best for the world's future. The Centers' vision is to create workplaces that attract the best quality staff available in the global market, stimulate their fullest productivity and creativity, and harness the wealth of skills, experiences, and talents that members of diverse identity groups can contribute.

The spirit of this commitment is captured in the words of the CGIAR Chairperson, Dr. Ismail Serageldin, in his video-taped remarks to the consultation: "As the CGIAR moves into the 21st century, agricultural research faces critical technical, institutional, political and social challenges. To meet them, we need to attract [and retain] the highest quality human resources, women and men, committed to promoting scientific advances and strengthening global partnerships... We have to ensure that our organizations change in fundamental ways that allow the joining of this diverse mix of brainpower to thrive so that we can work together to effectively promote sustainable agricultural development".³

- *Scope of work.* The next phase of work within the CG System should continue to consolidate and develop the work on gender, but also broaden the scope to include other aspects of staff diversity, such as culture, race, and ethnicity, among nationally and internationally recruited staff.
- *Approach.* Future work on gender and diversity should continue to focus on the "dual agenda" of promoting organizational effectiveness and ensuring equity in opportunities, contributions, and participation for diverse staff. This approach should build on and further develop the analytical framework and methods developed through the CGIAR Gender Program for addressing gender issues in the workplace.
- *Priorities.* Areas of emphasis should be to: 1) consciously increase the participation of women and members of other diverse identity groups across levels and functions in the centers and particularly at the senior management and scientific levels; 2) develop formal management systems that ensure equal opportunity for career development and advancement for members of diverse identity groups, including gender; 3) enhance the skills of managers to work effectively with diverse staff; and 4) create work environments that support the productivity of diverse staff and draw on their varied contributions for improved organizational performance. Focused efforts should continue to support the career advancement of women, including the continued offering of the Women's Leadership and Management course.
- *Leverage points for change.* Key leverage points for fostering change include: 1) revitalizing leadership commitment to addressing gender and staff diversity issues as a means to enhance

³ Serageldin, I. (1997). "Opening Remarks for the Inter-center Consultation on Gender Staffing: Lessons Learned and Future Directions", video presentation. ISNAR Headquarters, The Hague, Netherlands, April 28-30, 1998. See Annex 1.

organizational effectiveness; 2) fortifying the skills, knowledge, and roles of change agents within the centers; 3) enhancing networking and knowledge-sharing among the centers; 4) strengthening accountability mechanisms to ensure attainment of goals; and 5) providing targeted resources to support center initiatives.

- *Institutional mechanisms.* Continuing work on gender and staff diversity within the Centers should be supported by targeted resources and a system-level CGIAR Gender and Diversity Program. The system-level Program should be designed to support organizational change efforts within the Centers aimed at creating workplaces where the contributions of members of diverse identity groups are recognized and valued, and their varied perspectives and approaches to work are integrated into the core work and operations of the organization.⁴

CGIAR Gender and Diversity Program

Representatives at the consultation stressed that future efforts on gender and diversity in staffing should be led by the Centers and supported by the system-level Program. The CGIAR Gender and Diversity Program should be guided by a steering committee composed of representatives selected from senior managers in the centers and connected operationally to the centers through a network of Focal Points. The system-level Program, staffed by a small group of resource people, should complement Centers' initiatives by providing economies of scale in knowledge development and information dissemination, fostering the exchange of learning across the centers, building partnerships with external sources of expertise, and helping to sustain momentum for organizational change.

The goal of the CGIAR Gender and Diversity Program should be to enhance the Centers' capacity to pursue their missions and strategic objectives through: 1) strengthening recruitment of high quality staff from the global pool of women and other diverse identity groups; and 2) developing work cultures, practices, and systems that leverage the contributions of diverse staff to enhance equity and organizational effectiveness. Future work on gender and diversity staffing should continue to link directly to the mission of the CGIAR and the goal of enhancing organizational effectiveness and impact.

The Program should provide services to buttress Centers' initiatives in working with gender staffing and broader diversity issues. These services would include conceptual leadership, analytical and technical support, supplementary resources, management development training, and enhanced knowledge and information. At the same time, the Program should serve CGIAR members by providing information to increase understanding of gender and broader diversity issues and their relevance for organizational performance, monitoring and reporting on change within the CG System, and channeling funds to key leverage points for change.

Conclusion

Center representatives at the Consultation are strongly committed to the goals, strategies, and priorities for this new and revitalized initiative. They believe that it will maximize the benefits of gender and staff

⁴ Thomas, D. and Ely, R. (1996). "Making Differences Matter: A New Paradigm for Managing Diversity", *Harvard Business Review*, September – October, 1998, pp 79-90.

diversity for organizational effectiveness and efficiency in the Centers, and their impact in pursuing the CGIAR mission. There is a strong hope that CGIAR members and center leadership will share in this vision and support the development of the CGIAR Gender and Diversity Program and associated initiatives in the Centers through renewed commitment, human and financial resources, and active participation.

***INTER-CENTER CONSULTATION ON GENDER STAFFING:
LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS***

April 28-30, 1998
ISNAR, The Hague, The Netherlands

Transcript of Opening Remarks by Ismail Serageldin

Video Presentation

- As the CGIAR moves into the 21st century, agricultural research faces critical technical, institutional, political and social challenges. To meet them, we need to attract the highest quality of human resources, women and men, committed to promoting scientific advances and strengthening global partnerships.
- The 19th and 20th centuries marked a period of struggle in which women first won their right, long-denied, to become acknowledged scientists and professionals, and to enter the doors of premier scientific institutions. Sometimes we forget how short a time ago it was when a woman could not even be granted a Ph.D., to work as more than a research associate in a lab, or to publish under her own name, or report her research results at a public scientific conference. We only have to think of Nobel Laureate Barbara McClintock whose ground-breaking discovery in plant genetics was not recognized for 35 years. Or of Rosalind Franklin whose largely unrecognized x-ray spectographic evidence of the double helix structure of DNA enabled Professors Crick and Watson to publish proof of its structure and win the Nobel Prize.
- How many scientific breakthroughs have been lost to the world through the exclusion of women? Given women's relatively recent entrance as peers into the scientific community, it is no mystery why our scientific institutions might still retain deeply-ingrained elements of a masculine-oriented culture, even when many of the individuals working there today hold different values.
- Now, we must leave these eras behind. In the 21st century, women and men--from all backgrounds and cultures--will need to share the leadership of these global institutions. We have to ensure that our organizations change in fundamental ways that allow the joining of this diverse mix of brainpower to thrive, so that we can all work together to effectively promote sustainable agricultural development.
- We need to make a virtue of diversity--learn to harness the myriad talents and perspectives of our staffs, and strengthen our research and outreach programs.

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- Over the past six years, the CGIAR has made a concerted effort to free itself of the legacy of gender discrimination in science. It has strengthened its research to better understand and meet the needs of women farmers and consumers in developing countries. And, it has worked actively to recruit high potential women scientists and professionals on a large scale, and to adapt policies and practices in the workplace to better attract and retain them. As a result of those efforts, the CGIAR has moved from a position in which it was widely seen to be "behind the times" to one in which it is increasingly seen as a leader among international organizations, even if the work has not been fully accomplished.
- Today, women comprise 15% of the systems' internationally-recruited scientists and 40% of the locally-recruited scientists. Our own glass ceiling is beginning to crack as women have moved increasingly into leadership roles. Women now comprise 20% of our Board members and 10% of the middle and senior managers in the centers, including the crucial position of Directors of Research. This represents good progress, but we clearly have further to go if we are to be satisfied that the knowledge, perspectives, and experience of both women and men are being brought to bear on the science we practice.
- In the past few years, the CGIAR has made a conscious effort to open our doors and encourage women to join us through our recruiting processes. We have revised many of our policies to reflect the realities of a gender-integrated work force. We are now in that most challenging period of organizational change--where the work of integrating women and other non-traditional groups is well underway, but the centers' organization culture and work practices have not quite caught up. It is a time we may be tempted to pat ourselves on the back and say that change has been accomplished, when in fact it has only just started. It is a time when, as the reality of change becomes more widely understood, we can expect more widespread resistance to occur. And yet, because it is no longer "politically correct," this resistance will be less obvious and therefore harder to deal with. We need to address that resistance directly, expose those concerns to the light. Where they genuinely affect our mission, we must acknowledge them openly and address them boldly and creatively, not by shifting back to old ways. Where the concerns merely reflect old stereotypes, we need to educate.
- I am proud that the gender research component of this work was mainstreamed into the CGIAR's program in 1997, and expect continued strides forward in integrating those issues more thoroughly into the core research programs of the Centers.
- The future direction for the gender staffing component is the subject of discussion at this Consultation. Some elements should certainly be mainstreamed at this time; others may require a lot more work and experimentation. The CG System, like similar institutions around the world, is inventing, testing and evaluating what works best in this complex task. But whatever strategy you decide is best, be sure that it reflects a commitment to equity and to moving the system vigorously ahead to a fully gender-integrated workplace.
- Be ambitious; aim high. That has been the secret to the CGIAR's successes in the past, and will

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continue to be so in the future. Keep clearly in mind that 21st century science will demand a 21st century workplace where women and men are fully and equally empowered to do their best for the world's future. We cannot fail to rise to that challenge. And I have no doubt that we will succeed.

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