

CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

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October 22, 1974

TO: Members of the Consultative Group
FROM: Executive Secretariat
SUBJECT: International Food Policy Research Institute

Attached for the information of members of the Consultative Group are the minutes of a meeting of the steering committee on the International Food Policy Research Institute. The meeting took place under the chairmanship of Sir John Crawford in Ottawa on September 17, 1974.

Attachment

Report of Meeting on the Proposed
International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

at IDRC Headquarters, Ottawa, September 17, 1974

The Meeting was chaired by Sir John Crawford of Australia with
the following participants:

David Bell, Ford Foundation
Ralph Cummings Jr., Rockefeller Foundation
R. K. Davidson, Rockefeller Foundation
Lehman B. Fletcher, USAID
Harold Graves, IBRD
Lowell S. Hardin, Ford Foundation
Dale Hathaway, Ford Foundation
W. David Hopper, IDRC
E. Ojala, FAO
Peter Oram, FAO
M. Yudelman, IBRD

1. The Chairman welcomed the participants and read a letter from Mr. Mashler, regretting that the UNDP would not be represented at the meeting, but expressing full support for the proposal under consideration. Although the meeting was to be informal, the Chairman proposed that a report be prepared to be presented to the Consultative Group (CG) at their meeting on October 30 and 31, 1974. The Chairman presented the agenda and it was approved.

Item 1: Review of TAC Recommendations

2. As background, the Chairman referred to his report to the Consultative Group on behalf of TAC. (see attachment). He gave a resumé of TAC's consideration leading to its firm recommendation that an International Food Policy Research Institute be established.

3. The Chairman then reported the discussions at the Consultative Group meeting and referred to Mr. Baum's summary which supported further consideration at the next meeting of the Consultative Group on October 30 and 31.

4. Reference was made by Dr. Yudelman to the fact that, while strong support for the proposal was voiced at the August meeting, some had expressed doubts and a wish to delay deliberation until resolutions of the World Food Conference were available for consideration. Mr. Graves reported that he had had discussions with Dr. John Hannah, Deputy Director-General of WFC, and had received his encouragement and opinion that consideration of the IFPRI should proceed. (See his letter to Dr. Hopper attached) It was noted that Chapter 13 of The World Food Problem - proposals for national and international action, Item 9 of the Provisional Agenda for the WFC, proposing a world food information system, would be of interest to this group.

5. There was full acceptance, by those present, of the TAC proposal for an independent food policy research institute, and an endorsement of its general outline of functions and establishment. As recommended by TAC, the institute would have the independence, competence and flexibility to undertake critical analysis of key policy issues bearing on the world food situation. The institute would have the following mandate:

- a) to keep the global food and agricultural situation under continuous, independent review through research utilizing both published and unpublished data drawn from FAO, IBRD and other appropriate bodies.
- b) to examine selected major food and agricultural policy and trade problems, particularly those involving sensitive relationships between and among governments.
- c) to identify and research future problems of global concern likely to have an important bearing on food production.
- d) the proposed institute would also analyse the requirements for bringing in new areas not previously used for food production and would study the redevelopment needs of old land in need of reclamation action, for example the saline areas of India and the Sahelian zone of Africa.
- e) While TAC did not consider that training should be a major aspect of the Institute's work, it recommended there be a limited number of graduate research fellowships for participants from developing countries.

6. The proposed IFPRI would transmit up-to-date and relevant information derived from its research to policy-makers, through research monographs, seminars and workshops on selected topics, and specific devices such as an annual conference. Its most recent research and its implications would be discussed at the annual conference as well as published in the annual report.

7. TAC had stressed the need for close and sensitive working relationships between the Institute and other agencies, with major responsibilities in fields of food and agricultural policy analysis or socio-economic research bearing on the agricultural sector, such as FAO and IBRD. Dr. Ojala, for FAO, welcomed the closest working relationship possible. This could be arranged independently of any question of legal relationship.

Item 2: Structure of the Institute

8. The Chairman briefly outlined the TAC thinking on the organizational structure of the Institute. In parallel with other international centres, it recommended that an international board be set up to establish the institute and to provide close relationships with the other international agencies concerned. In accordance with CG practice, it looked to the establishment of a steering committee to examine such questions as the level and type of staffing and the location of the Institute, and also to open negotiations for the establishment and appointment of the proposed international board.

9. The meeting endorsed the general approach and emphasized certain points:

- a) As with the agricultural research centres, the independence of the Institute must be protected - the more so because of the potentially controversial nature of its work.

- b) It was judged that the international Board of Trustees should include about twelve to fifteen members. Focussing on the independent and professional nature of the proposed institute, the meeting favoured that a variety of nationalities be represented and that related professional experience be an important qualification in a significant proportion of the members. Those eligible for nomination to the board should include professionals in the field and could usefully include people with governmental responsibilities, but not as representatives of their governments. A small Board was considered desirable and the suggestion made that the large representation from the host country on the international centres' Boards would not be necessary in this case.
- c) TAC envisaged a professional staff of about 12, half of whom would be senior staff. The number could be kept small by the use of contract task forces or universities for specific studies. A number could be staff from the less developed countries working on a rotation basis and then returning as principal advisers and policy makers to their own countries. The staff of the international Centres would be closely associated with the work of the Institute.

10. The question of the need for a research or program committee of the IFPRI was raised, but it was thought that the partly professional nature of the Board would permit a sub-committee of the Board to act in this capacity. Moreover, it would be open to the director to arrange a committee of advice as he felt the need.

11. Names for the Board were put forward by some members and some geographical and professional criteria for selection were mentioned. It was agreed that Dr. Hopper should act as repository of these suggestions.

Item 3: Financing (and legal identity)

12. The Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the IDRC have indicated willingness, subject to the formal approval of their respective governing boards, to provide initial financial support. Some governments may also be willing to provide funding. (eg. The CIDA position was reported as "preferring not to be a founding member, but might be willing to be an early contributor".)

13. Given the sensitive nature of some of the Institute's anticipated research topics and the possibility of the need for a critical stance on some issues, some expressed fear that government support may affect or appear to affect the IFPRI's independence. Therefore support by private foundations may be the best approach, but this would be a matter for the Consultative Group.

14. It was agreed that requesting and receiving Consultative Group endorsement was extremely important. Endorsement from the CG normally implied:

- a) work controlled by an international board,
- b) work is genuinely independent of political interference,
- c) members of CG back financially,
- d) reports at Centres' week, and
- e) subject to review procedures.

15. There would appear to be no constitutional problem for the Consultative Group to endorse establishment of the institute even with the understanding that for an initial period it would be financed by private organizations which are part of the Consultative Group.

16. The intention is that the IFPRI would submit a report of its activities for review at Centres' week each year, and a budgetary report which would be open for examination in the usual way. TAC would also feel free to review the work of IFPRI from time to time. The IFPRI could also accept special project funds from outside the three agencies.

17. The existing international centres have a variety of legal identities ranging from incorporation within the regular corporate laws of the host country, statutory creation by host government, to international status by agreement between host government and other international agencies or governments. Any specific form of establishment depends upon the arrangement with the host country, therefore, a decision on the location must come first.

18. The Chairman explained that a relationship with FAO was considered for two reasons:

- a) to ensure a smooth working relationship, and
- b) to have a legal relationship between the two.

While a close working relationship with FAO was essential, and was assured, it was recognised that this did not necessitate a legal tie to FAO.

19. The legal relationship with FAO could take several forms:
- a) The FAO Conference could undertake to create a separate, but complementary organization under article XV of the FAO constitution. This would require the involvement of at least two governments.
 - b) A trust fund arrangement was available and would impose certain responsibilities on the Director-General of FAO.

It was recongized that these matters called for further examination.

Item 4: Location

20. The Chairman suggested some criteria which might be taken into consideration in evaluating options for location:

- a) a good intellectual climate and library,
- b) good links with FAO, IBRD and other international bodies,
- c) access to other work going on in the field,
- d) the possibility of international status,
- e) recruiting prospects,
- f) effective links or relations with other centres.

21. In the Chairman's view, Rome or Washington offered the best location, but he would also consider London, Paris, Geneva and Canada. Scandinavia was added to the list as a possible site. Of paramount importance was that any choice of location neither interfere with the independence of the institute nor hamper, in any serious way, recruitment through restrictive staff legal status and immigration procedures.

22. A Ford Foundation representative stated that they favoured Rome as a first choice, because Italy held a neutral position in world food policy and because of the proximity to the FAO, with a European city as a second choice. The IDRC President also supported Rome as the best choice if an assured connection with FAO could be arranged, with Washington as the second choice because of the presence of USDA and IBRD, both doing well-respected work in this field. London or Copenhagen could also be considered.

Item 5: Institute Staff

23. The IDRC is currently building a potential staffing list and would be pleased to receive suggestions.

Item 6: Next Steps

24. It was agreed:

- a) that a report of this meeting be transmitted to the Consultative Group for their meeting on October 30 and 31, 1974.
- b) that the CG be invited to consider extending its endorsement to the Institute and, as in the case of previous centres, to consider setting up a CG committee of interested parties, with one organization acting as executing agency, to establish the international Board for the Institute.

25. Further work will go forward in building potential lists for both Directors and staff for the IFPRI.

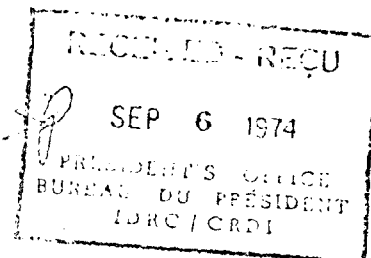
26. The meeting expressed the hope that a definitive statement might be prepared for the Consultative Group meeting on the possible relations with FAO. A detailed interpretation of the nature of legal establishment in Rome was desired, including assessment of whether Article XV applies to governments only and whether it applies only to an institute established in Rome. It was also agreed to explore, in detail, establishment in Washington and other locations.

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September 3, 1974

Dr. W. David Hopper
President
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Ottawa
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Dear David:

You will remember that during International Centers Week, the Consultative Group discussed the question of whether there would be anything inconsistent between planning the establishment of an International Food Policy Research Institute and the various plans which might be expected to emerge from the World Food Policy Conference.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Consultative Group Chairman said that he believed that the matter of establishing the Institute should continue to be considered within the framework of the Consultative Group. He suggested that there were two ways of pursuing the question of the relationship to the work of the World Food Conference: it might be pursued by the steering committee or by the Consultative Group Secretariat, but in either case, the procedure should be quite informal.

I mentioned to you on the telephone several weeks ago that I intended to visit the United Nations and to speak to Dr. John Hannah, the Deputy Secretary-General of the World Food Conference, about this matter. I made that visit on August 20. Dr. Hannah told me that in his opinion the establishment of the proposed Institute should by all means proceed.

It was subsequently pointed out to me that approval, in effect, is given to the idea of a food policy research institute by the draft recommendations which the Preparatory Committee of the World Food Conference will consider in its meetings that begin next September 23. The relevant draft recommendation occurs in Paragraph 307 of the Conference paper, "The World Food Problem: Proposals for National and International Action." That paragraph reads in part, "... It would be a mistake to neglect other problems... a solution to which could benefit all parts of the world. These global topics might better be undertaken

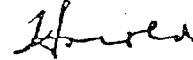
Dr. W. David Hopper

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in developed countries because of their sophisticated requirements, their high cost and their long-term nature. Examples include... developing more sensitive global machinery for analyzing and understanding issues related to world food policy, the factors bearing on it, and their future implications...." The complete text of this part of the paper is attached.

Sincerely yours,



Harold Graves

Enclosure

THE WORLD FOOD PROBLEM

proposals for national and international action

306. In Chapter 3 it was shown that to meet the food requirements of 1985 large areas of new land will have to be brought into cultivation especially in Africa and South America. To make this possible the necessary resources should be allocated to studying the soil problems of the savannah belts and to the management of the soils which are exposed for the first time when tropical rain forests are cleared. There is here a complex of problems which needs to be solved before arable farming can be maintained permanently in these districts.

307. While, as can be seen from the foregoing examples, the topics have immediate application in some or all developing countries, it would be a grave mistake to neglect other problems of a much more fundamental character, a solution to which could benefit all parts of the world. These global topics might better be undertaken in developed countries because of their sophisticated requirements, their high cost and their long-term nature. Examples include the evolution of new "genetic engineering" and propagation techniques; better understanding of the nitrogen-fixing mechanism; further insight into energy/agriculture relationships, including the better and cheaper utilization of sunshine, wind and water as energy sources, the improvement of photosynthetic efficiency of plants, basic aspects of radiation technology;^{1/} pollution studies as related to agriculture; improved means of monitoring and understanding weather and relating weather patterns to crop and livestock production and research (perhaps one of the more grossly neglected aspects of science); developing more sensitive global machinery for analyzing and understanding issues related to world food policy, the factors bearing on it, and their future implications; and so on.

^{1/} There are, of course, already wide uses for techniques derived from atomic energy resources in agricultural research. These include the induction of mutations as an aid to plant breeding; numerous applications in pest control, such as the sterile male technique; the use of tracer isotopes, neutron probes, etc. in work on soil-plant-water relationships and plant nutrition; food preservation by irradiation; the development of radiation-attenuated vaccines for the control of pathogenic parasites in livestock etc. Further advances may be expected from future basic research.