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**OGIAR TASK FORCE ON SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

**FINAL REPORT, OGIAR TASK FORCE  
ON SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

**INTERNATIONAL CENTERS WEEK, WASHINGTON, D.C.,  
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Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

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October 17, 1989

Mr. W.D. Hopper  
Chairman, CGIAR  
The World Bank  
1818 H Street, N.W.  
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Dear David:

I have great pleasure in submitting the final report of the CGIAR Task Force on Sub-Saharan Africa.

Created by your predecessor, Shauid Hussain, in May 1986, in response to concerns of Group members, the Task Force was charged with suggesting innovative steps to strengthen the collaboration between the international centers and the national systems.

The Task Force has had a longer life than anticipated. During the three years since its formation relationships between the international centers and the national systems in Sub-Saharan Africa have evolved, in some ways fairly radically. The longer lifespan has allowed the Task Force to observe this evolution, and indeed to help inaugurate and test mechanisms for regional collaboration between national systems and the international centers. The CGIAR has also evolved over this period. Generally speaking impressive progress has been achieved in going beyond rhetoric to substance on questions of partnership and collaboration.

In its efforts the Task Force has had the highest level of cooperation from the Center Directors Standing Committee on Sub-Saharan Africa. The Committee gained considerable momentum early in the life of the Task Force and showed itself to be a valuable mechanism for interactions with regional and national organizations on issues where more than one center is involved. The Task Force would encourage the CGIAR to support a continuing role for the Committee in such interactions.

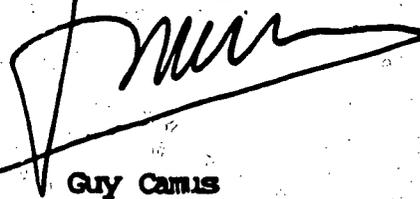
A major conclusion from the experience of the Task Force is the importance of interactive mechanisms and sustained support for national initiatives towards regional research collaboration on transnational problems. I place the emphasis here on initiatives coming from a country or groups of countries. Clearly, given that such initiatives will inevitably have to be mobilized with external resources, the inaugural process has to be a highly sensitive one.

Many of the issues on the interactions between international centers and national systems have remained pending for some time. Some of them were aired at the first ad hoc donors meeting in Paris early this year and again at Canberra. As you will see several recommendations of the Task Force identify problems which need the attention of the Group: where policy is in need of

change and where the centers are in need of closer guidance. It is the hope of the Task Force that our final report to the 1989 International Centers Week in Washington will be followed up by CGIAR agenda items reflecting these issues for the 1990 mid year and possibly subsequent meetings.

Task Force members would like to recognize the two secretaries to the Task Force for their contributions; Max Rives from inception until mid 1988 when he returned to France from the CG Secretariat, and Mike Collinson for this final year. The long experience of the center/national system interface in Sub-Saharan Africa that he was able to bring to bear made a valuable contribution to the Task Force deliberations and this final report.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Camus', written over a horizontal line.

Guy Camus  
Chairman, CGIAR Task Force on Sub-Saharan Africa

## FIDAL REPORT OF THE CGIAR TASK FORCE ON SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

### SUMMARY AND MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the final report of the Africa Task Force set up by the CGIAR in May 1986 to examine the linkages between the CGIAR System and the national research systems in Africa South of the Sahara with the goal of enhancing coordination and improving the effectiveness of center activities.

The rapid expansion of the centers' presence in Africa has occasionally caused friction between some national systems and some international centers. Awareness of this heightened during the 1980's and, following ICW 85 and a meeting called by the CGIAR Chairman in Bellagio in January, it was discussed at the mid-year meeting at Ottawa in June 1986.

The CGIAR Africa Task Force was one of three initiatives taken to improve the national/international interface in agricultural research in Africa in 1986. The Center Directors had set up a standing-committee on Africa earlier in the year and the donors had established SPAAR with a mandate to improve the coordination of donor funding for agricultural research in Africa.

Central to the terms of reference of the Africa Task Force was to "suggest innovative steps through which the action of the IARCs, donors, and national systems could strengthen the capability of the latter." In examining existing and potential linkages the Task Force joined with the Center Directors Standing-Committee for Africa in "on the ground" initiatives.

The Task Force supported the Center Directors and joined in an initiative to be developed with SACCAR, the agricultural research committee of the SADCC and an established regional organization. SACCAR felt the initial proposal missed the opportunity to rationalize some current IARC activities in the region. A modified proposal was accepted by the SACCAR Board in June 1989. It is clear that the consultative process between the SACCAR Board, the Center Directors Standing Committee and the Task Force has helped dissipate the issues in Southern Africa.

A West African initiative launched by the Task Force and supported by the Centers contrasted in one aspect: there was no formal regional organization joining the participating countries. Helped by a consultant team supported by France, eleven countries set out their national research needs in maize and cassava and identified priority research which could usefully be done at the regional level. This was discussed with CORAF, IITA and SAFGRAD as existing, regionally active, research entities. IITA was requested by the participating countries to take a coordinating role. A Global Plan and corresponding budget, was prepared and presented to SPAAR for funding in April 1989.

Both initiative highlight the value of a genuine consultative process as a prelude to effective partnership. Regional collaboration in research remains a powerful concept. Common interests facilitate a spirit of scientific collaboration at the regional level. The Task Force recommends:

- that national systems take the initiative to manage the interface between national and international research;
- CGIAR policy reinforces countries' efforts for the establishment of regional interfacing mechanisms where common interests are clear;
- such interfaces, where established, are the appropriate venues for reconciling national, regional, and the CGIAR's global priorities;
- the Group and SPAAR discuss further the coordination and channelling of funding for regional interfacing mechanisms, and the need for reconciliation of national, regional and CGIAR global research priorities in the regional activities of the international centers.

From its deliberations on the regional activities of the IARCs, the Task Force recommends:

- continuing involvement of the Center Directors Standing Committee on Africa in dialogue with African national system.
- a contractual arrangement between centers and national systems where centers programs carry no local priority but require an input from the national system.
- that general, non-specialized training be coordinated across centers at the regional or sub-regional level.

The need for effective collaborative mechanisms in Sub-Saharan Africa which caused the creation of the Task Force in 1986 remains urgent. It continues to deserve attention from the CGIAR.

## **1.0 THE CGIAR AND AFRICA**

### **1.1 The CGIAR Task Force on Sub-Saharan Africa**

1. At its mid-term meeting in Ottawa in May 1986 the CGIAR recommended a Task Force to examine ways to improve collaboration between the CGIAR System, its international centers and the national research systems in Sub-Saharan Africa. The CGIAR Chairman established a group with membership which included representatives of three relevant elements of the global agricultural research system; donors, African scientists and TAC members (See list of members at Annex 1.). Substantial progress has been achieved, it is summarized and recommendations made in this final report of the Task Force.

### **1.2 CGIAR Impact in Africa**

2. The 1985 Impact Study mounted by the CGIAR came after 20 years of center activity in collaboration with African national systems. Some of the earliest interactions were with CIMMYT, one of the two oldest centers. By the time the CGIAR was founded in 1971, CIMMYT was collaborating in international nursery networks with 14 national wheat and 9 national maize programs in Africa. The collaborating countries selected materials which performed well for use in their own breeding work and provided feedback of the results from the nurseries to the center. IITA was the first center established in Africa, in 1967.

3. To date there have been no technological breakthroughs in Africa comparable to the Asian green revolution in wheat and rice with which IARC assistance can be credited. The single most dramatic impact in farmers' fields has probably been in the checking of cassava mealybug through IITA's biological control program. The Impact Study identified 244 CGIAR Center related varieties released by African national programs. The main commodity releases were reported as; Maize (61), Bread wheat (40), Potato (31) and Cassava (26).

4. The Study evidenced that the centers, as producers of intermediate goods, have had their major impacts in regions where national systems are strong. In Africa most of them remain weak, indeed an awareness of crisis in African national systems began to grow from the early 1980's.

5. Much of the positive impact of the centers in Africa has been through training and the development and promotion of appropriate research methodologies in the national systems. The Impact Study reported well over 5,000 African professionals had received some kind of training from the centers through the end of 1984.

5. Despite these efforts, and despite massive efforts by the donors through bilateral channels, it is recognized that national research output in Africa has been limited throughout the 1970's and 1980's. This has been caused by low budget allocations and an emphasis in some countries, on large numbers rather than a high quality of research staff. Low budget allocations have originated from low political awareness of the fundamental role of new agricultural technology in economic development. Large cadres have arisen from the need to

employ numbers of new agricultural graduates, educated at public expense, who faced limited opportunities in the private sector.

7. The rapid expansion of the CG Centers activities in Africa needed wider and wider collaboration with underfunded national systems and, in general, adopted a supply driven approach in expanding collaboration. This has created some frustrations in those systems and these have raised issues for the CGIAR.

### 1.3 The Current Status of the CGIAR Centers in Africa

8. Table 1. shows the 1988 location of CG Center outposted staff by major continental regions. The table does not include staff at HQ's where these are located in the region.

9. Africa stands out with 158 outposted Centers' staff compared to 68 in Asia and North Africa and 23 in Latin America and the Caribbean. The distribution is weighted by very large IITA teams in Cameroon (21) and Zaire (14), and by the sub-centers developed by ICRISAT in Niamey (17 staff) and Bulawayo (8 staff), nevertheless numbers in Africa are large. Similarly, centers have staff in a large number of African countries, table 1. shows that 23 countries host centers staff and centers report strong links with a total of 37 countries. This high allocation confirms an earlier assessment made in 1986 by the Center Directors Standing-Committee on Africa. This 1986 assessment also showed allocations of funds to Africa by commodities and types of activity; major allocations where;

- By commodity; livestock 22% (ILCA & ILRAD), Rice 19% (inputs provided by four centers; WARDA, IITA, CIAT and IRRI) and Maize 15% (inputs from CIMMYT and IITA).
- Cassava 6%, Cowpea and Millet 5% each and Sorghum and Potato 3% each.

## 2.0 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CGIAR TASK FORCE

### 2.1 Problems of the IARCs' expansion in Africa

10. The build up of the CGIAR presence in parallel with difficult times for the national research systems in Africa has created tensions. The Centers working in Africa were young and pre-occupied. They were struggling to organize and to implement their mandates. Even for the older centers the regional programs of the mid 1970's were a new venture with no proven modes of organization. At the CGIAR the idea of a global agricultural research system with interdependent levels and strong national systems as its foundation, has found support only relatively recently.

#### 2.1.1 Centers Learning by doing

11. Trial and error dominated the process of working out collaborative arrangements with the national systems.

- Centers based their programs on their mandates and on priorities developed through their governance and management structures. There was no necessary congruence between these priorities and those of the countries with which they sought collaboration.
- There were separate diplomatic efforts by each center. Initiatives on country/center agreements - which country and when - were taken independently.
- There was also a lack of collaboration in programming.

12. One well known example on the programming side is IITA and CIMMYT competition with overlapping mandates in maize. Overlaps extended into other areas; CIAT, CIMMYT, CIP, IITA and ILCA, as well as ICRAF and others, offered to train nationals in their own variants of adaptive research. Negotiations were often done with the same research managers, sometimes even the trainees were the same. Some training was designed from the perspective of the centers rather than the needs of the national systems.

13. When four types of center initiative are distinguished;

- strategic and applied research done at the centers for which worldwide observations are needed. eg. monitoring disease.
- mutually beneficial center strategic research and national program applied research. eg. varietal testing.
- collaborative work in a training mode to build up capacity in national research programs.
- technical assistance to substitute for national program capacity on some urgent research problem.

it is clear that each has different obligations for the partners and requires its own pattern of resource commitments and decision making. Confounding among these types of initiative has sometimes resulted in confusion in the objectives of the partnered centers and national systems.

14. Heavy burdens were sometimes imposed on some collaborating national systems particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa. Centers competed for the time of the senior research managers, taking them onto their Boards, seeking their attendance at their sponsored meetings, seeking their backing for new initiatives from the center's own strategy.

15. There were similar pressures in the field. While many of the nursery networks do have a payoff for the collaborating country, many hundreds of lines may be included of which only a few have potential at the trial site. The work required to implement the nursery and the observation and reporting activities are sometimes seen as excessive. They often represent a significant hidden cost for the country by preoccupying the time of good scientists.

TABLE 1. LOCATION OF OUTPOSTED STAFF BY REGIONS - END 1988

CENTER		GLOBAL		MAINLY REGIONAL			AFRICA ONLY			SERVICE CENTERS				TOTALS	
		CIMMYT	CIP	CIAT	ICRISAT	IRRI	ICARDA	IITA	ILCA	WARDA	ILRAD	IFPRI	ISMAR	IDPCR	
AFRICA SOUTH OF SAHARA	1. NO. OF STAFF	15	10	6	43	2	1	45	15	9	2	5	2	3	158
	2. NO. OF COUNTRIES WITH STAFF LOCATED	4	5	3	6	1	1	11	5	5	2	5	2	2	(23)
	3. NO. OF COUNTRIES WITH STRONG LINKS	8	9	6	15	1	2	11	5	5	13	13	15	30	(37)
ASIA AND NORTH AFRICA	1. NO. OF STAFF	15	17	2	2	12	11				0	2	2	5	68
	2. NO. OF COUNTRIES WITH STAFF LOCATED	6	7	1	3	9	6				0	2	0	2	(16)
	3. NO. OF COUNTRIES WITH STRONG LINKS	14	11	2	4	13	10				1	8	6	20	(28)
AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	1. NO. OF STAFF	13	3	16	1	1	1				0	0	0	1	36
	2. NO. OF COUNTRIES WITH STAFF LOCATED	7	3	7	1	1	1				0	0	0	1	(9)
	3. NO. OF COUNTRIES WITH STRONG LINKS	20	14	14	5	1	1				0	5	4	1	(21)
TOTAL	1. NO. OF STAFF	53	30	24	48	15	13	45	15	9	2	7	4	9	262
	2. NO. OF COUNTRIES WITH STAFF LOCATED	17	15	11	10	11	8	11	5	5	2	7	2	5	(48)
	3. NO. OF COUNTRIES WITH STRONG LINKS	42	34	22	24	15	13	11	5	4	14	28	24	51	(66)

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16. As the Impact Study highlights, eager to show progress, in part to satisfy donors, the centers published materials have often claimed the credit for joint achievements on the ground. At the same time, with center resources often underpinning their participation, it is difficult for national researchers to feel equal partners. Similarly, when nationals on "the team" are obliged to take time out from their professional roles to keep their families, it may be difficult for international researchers to understand and could easily be interpreted as a lack of commitment. All such factors create tensions and jeopardize collaboration.

## 2.2 CGIAR Discussion of the Problems

17. The effective interfacing of international and national research institutions as complementary parts of a global agricultural research system has been a recurring theme in TAC and CGIAR deliberations over the 1980's.

### 2.2.1 Reviews of the CGIAR System

18. The first review of the CGIAR in 1977 viewed the interface from a narrow perspective:

"The central thrust of each center should be .... to cooperate with national research and production programs to the extent necessary to further the center's own research activities."

In its listing of "appropriate" collaborative activities the Review was more flexible and only firmly ruled out those of a technical assistance nature in which international staff substituted for national scientists.

19. The Second CGIAR Review in 1981, while acknowledging that loss of control over work programs was a justifiable worry, emphasized that effective participation in the official national decision making process on research programs far outweighed the negative considerations.

"[A center] ... must ensure that its collaborative programs come under the scrutiny of the appropriate national coordinating mechanism."

20. It also gave weight to informal collaboration between scientists as equals in all aspects of the program. In support of this it listed sources of frustrations expressed by national researchers at its three regional fact finding meetings.

### 2.2.2 The 1985 TAC Paper on CGIAR Priorities

21. The interface was discussed extensively in the development of the 1985 TAC paper on CGIAR Priorities and Strategies. The paper clearly stated one principle;

"that national systems should become equal partners with centers in the

planning and execution of programs designed to meet national needs."

It did not address the issue of whether the centers had a set of programs that did not seek to meet national needs, or, if they had, how to reconcile the two sets.

22. The paper also highlighted the continuing weakness of national programs in Africa and the dilemma for the CGIAR: The need to move upstream countered by the need to build national research capacity to ensure the use of the output from the centers.

### 2.2.3 The Bellagio Group meeting, January 1986

23. During the discussion of the Priorities Paper at ICW in November 1985 the interface was one of a set of issues concerning Africa which the CGIAR identified for urgent attention. Chairman Shahid Husain called a group together in Bellagio in January 1986 which addressed the question of collaborative mechanisms from a wider perspective. The Bellagio Report "identified an urgent need for institutional mechanisms that will:

- Determine priorities and plan coherent CG programs for developing improved and sustainable production systems for the small farmer on a sub-regional basis;
- provide adequate oversight of the implementation and progress of such programs that might operate with a series of commodity research networks;
- foster collaboration among staff from different centers, related international research organizations and national research systems;
- integrate all center activities on a sub-regional basis so as to avoid the complications and misunderstandings that have arisen when more than one center operates in a particular country; and
- when invited to do so, facilitate direct support for the national programs.

24. Several institutional approaches that could provide these mechanisms were discussed. All involved a de-centralized approach in which the experimental work would be done collaboratively with the national programs."

25. The Bellagio Meeting requested the TAC and the CG Secretariat to consult with the relevant organizations and identify an institutional structure to meet these needs.

#### 2.2.4 The 1986 mid year meeting in Ottawa, Canada

26. The Bellagio Report was discussed by both TAC and by the CGIAR at its mid year meeting in Ottawa in May 1986. Donor representatives mooted the idea of a committee to take on the issue. This was widely endorsed and was referred to as a Task Force. The responsibility was given to the CGIAR Chairman to establish the CGIAR Africa Task Force, and the TAC Chairman was requested to be its chairman.

### 2.3 Other Initiatives for Coordination in Agricultural Research in Africa

27. At least two other coordination initiatives were ongoing when the donors took the decision, in May 1986, to set up the CGIAR Africa Task Force. The donors recognized the need for coordination amongst themselves and had set up SPAAR - the Special Program for African Agricultural Research, and the Center Directors set up a Standing-Committee on Africa. Over time links established themselves between the three groups.

#### 2.3.1 SPAAR

28. SPAAR and the Africa Task Force of the CGIAR are essentially two hands of the same donors who feel the need for a concerted attack on the problems of African agricultural research. Links between the two are being developed in particular as Task Force plans for improved interaction between the IARCs and African national systems are brought before the SPAAR for funding.

#### 2.3.2 Center Directors Standing-Committee on Africa

30. In early 1986 the Center Directors established a committee to look at the Consultative Group functions in Africa, with an emphasis on regional differentiated programs. The committee was set up in the belief that the Center Directors themselves have a responsibility to increase the effectiveness of the centers' work in Africa. The committee's goal was to define informal, decentralized mechanisms that operate on a modest scale and to continue working to translate these into concrete suggestions on a regional basis for the consideration by the Center Directors as a whole, and by TAC.

### 2.4 CGIAR Task Force; Strategy, Terms of Reference, and Composition

31. Discussion had highlighted the long-term need to build up the capacity of the national programs. The Task Force's responsibility was narrower, seeking the processes through which the CGIAR could most effectively help to provide new technologies and build national research capacity in Africa.

32. Two features in particular were considered essential for processes to be effective;

- giving priority to the research needs as expressed by the countries and their national systems, while aiming to find the largest common denominator between these priorities and the global priorities identified by the centers and the CGIAR system;

- starting from the ultimate client; the small farmer, and moving from the problems identified there to the research and collaborative approaches required to solve them.

33. A preparatory meeting of the Task Force was held at CIAT in Columbia in June 1986, an initial full meeting in Paris in September, and a second meeting preceded ICW in Washington, D.C. in November 1986. The original terms of reference drawn at Cali were modified and discussed several times and those finally agreed by mid 1987 are set out below.

#### CGIAR Africa Task Force : Terms of Reference

34. In close collaboration with the National Systems and in consultation with Center Directors, the CGIAR Task Force will seek ways of making the CG System more effective within the overall agricultural research effort in Africa. To this effect the Task Force will:

- (a) obtain an inventory of current center activities, and analyze it together with other relevant information to identify research needs and gaps in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- (b) consider the policy issues relating to agricultural research and technology development in Africa;
- (c) establish appropriate linkages with SPAAR;
- (d) suggest innovative steps through which the actions of the IARCs, donors, and national systems could strengthen the capability of the latter;
- (e) propose processes and timetables through which cooperation can be achieved.

35. The composition of the Task Force aimed to ensure linkages with previous deliberations on the topic, in TAC, at the Bellagio Meeting and at the Ottawa mid term CGIAR meeting, and interactions with African research leaders.

36. The Task Force has worked very closely with the Center Directors' Standing-Committee on Africa. Many of the Task Force meetings were held jointly with the Committee. Having begun to move strongly into regional programs in Africa some 10 years before, the need to rationalize some areas of their operations had become clearer to the Center Directors. The Committee made two direct contributions to the Africa Task Force through an inventory of IARC activities in Africa compiled by ISNAR, and a paper on research policy issues in Africa and options for the CGIAR, prepared by IFPRI.

37. The interaction with the Center Directors Committee stimulated the shift from a consideration of processes by the Task Force to the design of substantive, implementable, projects to test processes on the ground. It led to an agreed focus on collaboration between Centers and national systems in solving urgent production problems, with an emphasis on adaptive research.

### 3.0 THE WORK OF THE OGIAR TASK FORCE

#### 3.1 Task Force Life

38. The Task Force had been asked to make its final report to ICW 1986. It became clear, despite two further meetings planned before ICW, this was too short a period. Eventually the Task Force had eight formal meetings and wound up in September 1989. (see Calendar of Meetings; Annex 2.).

39. At their meeting in Paris in September 1986 the Task Force accepted the invitation from the Center Directors to join in an exploratory collaborative project. The IARCs with programs in the SADC sub-region had agreed to a collaborative effort with an agro-ecological zone as the focus for the approach. The Task Force was interested in SADC as a group of nine countries sharing an existing regional mechanism for collaboration in agricultural research.

40. The Paris meeting listed other possible initiatives; in West Africa on cassava cropping systems, in the Horn of Africa, and in the Sahel. It was agreed that new initiatives would be additional to existing activities and would require extra funding.

41. While meeting in Harare in 1987 two other proposals were considered by the Task Force;

- A study of the relationships within a single country; both of the centers with the national system and between centers.
- An approach based on more than one commodity across countries with no formal ties in agricultural research. It could be designed around multiple commodities and cover a number of countries without a formal regional mechanism. The Task Force agreed that Maize and Cassava in the coastal belt of West Africa would provide a pilot scheme.

42. The Task Force also discussed the so called "one country approach" There was unanimous agreement that each country clearly had the right to ask for what it needed from each center. It was also felt that a country might ask for help from the Center Directors' Standing Committee on Africa to resolve any dispute.

43. Dr. Swindale outlined an ICRISAT initiative for the Sahel to the fifth meeting of the Task Force in September 1987, in Paris. The Task Force welcomed the proposal on "Millet Based Cropping Systems in the Sahel" and asked ICRISAT to develop it in consultation with the national systems in the region.

44. The regional initiatives gave considerable momentum to the work of the Task Force.

### 3.2 The Southern African Initiative

45. The initiative would focus on the maize based production systems of the mid-altitude zone of Southern Africa containing some 6 million hectares of maize. CIMMYT was proposed as the lead center of a consortium seen as including as many as six centers (CIAT, CIMMYT, IITA, ILCA, IFPRI and ISNAR) as well as SACCAR, (the agricultural research authority within SADOC) and the interested national systems.

46. The outline proposal prepared by CIMMYT was well received by SACCAR. It was seen to fit into the regional research scheme already approved by the SADC Ministers. Six countries had expressed an interest in being involved; Angola, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. A procedure for development of the proposal in collaboration with the interested countries and with SACCAR was agreed, and a timetable drawn up.

47. The Task Force noted that through the proposal was for new activities it was felt that this collaborative effort could be expected to draw existing programs and resources to it over the longer term. The funding of a final project was discussed, as were the possible mechanisms for handling funds for the different collaborating partners.

48. A "neutral" leader was identified who would 'team up with a Centers' and a SACCAR representative and with nominated project officers for each of the involved countries. The Rockefeller Foundation agreed to cover the cost of the investigation. Country visits were undertaken in the mid 1987, a progress report was made to the SACCAR Board in August 1987 and the draft report of the mission was discussed with the Task Force in its September meeting. The Team reported strong support for the consultative process from the participating countries.

49. The draft report identified six problems of farming in maize production systems of the mid-altitude zone, each important and common to more than one of the five countries visited, each relevant to more than one of the IARCs. It also outlined three collaborative models, drawing on existing experience in Africa, under which chosen programs might operate.

50. The report was to be considered by the SACCAR Board in December. The Task Force agreed that, subject to acceptance by the Board, further development of the proposal should be by consultation between the national systems, SACCAR and the Center Directors' African Standing-Committee. The SACCAR Board at their December 1988 meeting postponed consideration of the range of initiatives proposed in the report. They expressed the view that the Terms of Reference for the Report had been inadequate and had failed to include the need to rationalize existing IARC activities in the region. The SACCAR Board invited the Center Directors to discuss this omission and requested a second mission from the team to supplement the first report by explicit consideration of existing IARC programs.

51. New terms of reference for the second team, which this time operated under the auspices of the SACCAR Board rather than CIMMYT, incorporated these concerns. A second report was drafted and presented to the SACCAR Board in mid-March 1989

after a further mission to the region in January and February. The Board endorsed the report and asked for some changes in the text. A final amended report was sent to SACCAR in July 1989. The report's central conclusion was for a funding mechanism with heads of expenditure for collaborative projects under local control. Through the mechanism the national systems can invite IARC's, and SACCAR regional agencies, to work with them in specific project areas. The report identified three projects which might be used to test the process.

52. The report was considered by the Task Force, in the presence of the Chairman of the SACCAR Board. The Task Force noted with interest that the SACCAR Board was in general agreement with the main conclusions of the consultation and that a number of specific projects had been identified. Of particular significance was the proposal that NARS and SACCAR should have a say in the process by which donor funds are made available for international agricultural research in the region. The SACCAR Chairman confirmed that the Board believed the process was more important than the particular projects identified. He expressed the view that the dialogue had brought progress in understanding between local and international partners.

53. The Task Force encouraged the SACCAR to follow up the conclusions of the study and introduce the proposed projects to donors.

54. The Task Force noting the activity of the Standing Committee of the Center Directors in the region recommends that the Committee work with the SACCAR Board to develop a mechanism for continuing liaison between the centers and SACCAR.

### 3.3 The West African Initiative

55. In the November 1986 meeting of the Task Force in Washington the French representative suggested a multi-commodity initiative across West African countries. Lack of a formal regional organization for research distinguished the initiative. The Task Force welcomed the suggestion and the contrast offered with the initiative with SACCAR in Southern Africa as a formal regional organization. It accepted the French offer to develop it into a proposal. Introduced to the February 1987 Task Force meeting the proposal was for a collaborative effort between the IARCs, other international scientists and the national systems:

- to identify research needs in Rice, Maize and Cassava in humid and sub-humid West Africa;
- to mount a collaborative approach, by a combination of national and regional research initiatives to solve the priority problems identified.

56. The Task Force modified the proposal by excluding rice and by limiting the initiative to the eleven coastal West African countries. A French offer to fund the consultation process was accepted and the French Ministry of Cooperation was requested to act as an executing agency. A steering committee was designated to guide the initiative. Implementation was to be through a coordinator and teams of consultants in three phases:

- a desk study on available literature;
- country visits to identify with national scientist the key maize and cassava research problems, current resources employed in research on the two crops, the shortfalls preventing effective programs, and ways in which needs might be met, nationally or internationally;
- a general consultation to establish;
  - links among countries with common priorities
  - consolidation of needs
  - reorganization of international efforts towards these
  - estimation of the extra resources required

57. A coordinator was identified and teams selected. The desk study was completed by September 1987 and the country visits by March 1988. CORAF, a francophone networking body including rice, maize and cassava in its activities asked to be associated with the initiative. Together with SAFGRAD and IITA, also active in networking in these crops, its participation was welcomed.

58. At the Consultation in April 1988 the national systems and the networking organizations were able to react to the country reports. The elements of a Global plan of Action were identified and developed during the meeting. These included support for priority research areas in maize and cassava, support for training and for on farm research. The Consultation saw a convergence of needs and was successful in eliciting a collaborative atmosphere which was termed "the Spirit of Lome." A great deal of emphasis was laid in the Plan on the need for operational funds in the national systems. At the consultation IITA, helped by the coordinator, agreed to complete the Global Plan of Action and to identify approaches to donors for funding of the identified program. Intensive action allowed the presentation of an outline of the Global Plan to SPAAR in its October meeting. The revisions of the country papers agreed at the Lome Consultation were distributed at ICW in Washington in November 1988.

59. The final Global Action Plan was presented by IITA, on behalf of the 11 national systems, to SPAAR at its April 1989 meeting, also held in Lome. The Action Plan estimated a total budget requirement of US\$12 million for a five-year period. In presenting the Action Plan, IITA emphasized four points:

- (i) The Plan is considered the minimum essential requirement to activate past investment in agricultural research and to make it effective.
- (ii) The project is a mechanism for transcending linguistic barriers that have often deferred programs for regional collaboration in West Africa.
- (iii) This is an experimental bottom-up model with potential for extension to other commodities and regions in Africa.

- (vi) The donor members of the CGLAR and SPAAR have encouraged this as an innovation in regional collaboration since the planning started two years ago. Having invested so much time on the preparation of the Action Plan, the NARS would experience justifiable frustration and disappointment if the donors are unable to provide the required funding.

60. SPAAR members received the Plan of Action favorably and urged rapid development of the process for managing the Plan so that several donors expressing interest could contribute as early as possible to its implementation.

61. The participating countries met at IITA 15-16 June to develop principles for the management of the Plan. At this meeting, the governance procedure was established, a steering committee was elected, and mechanisms for regional linkages were developed. IITA agreed, upon request on the NARS, to provide the secretariat for the Action Plan, to set up the Trust Fund, and to assume leadership in raising funds. The first meeting of the newly elected Steering Committee was held 27-28 September, and conditions were satisfied so that donors are now able to make direct grants to the Trust Fund for the Action Plan. The Steering Committee expressed a high degree of urgency concerning rapid implementation and IITA is actively encouraging SPAAR to respond positively to the initiative.

62. Some initial funding has already been received but many donors have cited internal administrative mechanisms that will delay and perhaps prevent their making contribution to the Plan. After having expressed enthusiastic support for this model of NARS collaboration in establishing regional priorities, the donors should attach urgency to devising administrative means for rapid, positive response to the request.

63. The Action Plan provided for thorough evaluation of the implementation of the Plan so that both donors and national governments can learn from the experience. It is essential that national leaders place high priority on the process because, as their economies strengthen over the five-year period of the Plan, they will be expected to incorporate these research activities into their national budgets.

#### 3.4 A Sahel Initiative

64. In September 1987 the Director General of ICRISAT presented a proposal to the Task Force for the Sahel. Centered around ICRISAT's existing on station research collaboration seeking to improve millet based cropping systems, it proposed to extend the themes of that work to experiments on farmers fields.

65. The Task Force approved the focus on the Millet based cropping systems of the Sahel and proposed that a wider geographical spread be sought. The Task Force however expressed the view that the identification of priority problems perceived by the national systems should shape the substance of the experimentation. It requested that ICRISAT play a lead role in the development

of an initiative for these systems and indicated that consultation with the national systems would be a logical first step.

66. ICRISAT consulted informally with the Directors of eight national systems in the Sahel who expressed interest. The Task Force Chairman introduced the initiative and ICRISAT's role in it to 10 West African countries who might be involved; Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Tchad and Togo. In addition SAFGRAD, CILSS and CORAF were invited to participate. All parties were brought together in a meeting in Niamey. The meeting helped countries to understand how they could combine positive results from separate applied research efforts into operational scale adaptive research trials.

67. A further meeting was proposed prior to the 1989 planting season for liaison on zoning the areas to be covered into identifiable farming systems, and on experimental content and design.

68. The Task Force recommended that any subsequent meeting should make a major effort to have the priorities of the countries involved drive the process. ICRISAT was asked to seek special project funding to finance the development of the initiative, most immediately a meeting with the national systems in early 1989.

69. The approach was significantly different from the other initiatives in that it was center initiated and represented an extension of an ongoing program. The Task Force expressed early concerns that what was originally a center initiated experiment should be broadened on the basis of extensive consultation with national programs. Our view is that this project has not evolved into a collaborative project based on expressed national needs. The Task Force therefore concludes that the project remains outside Task Force initiatives until a full consultative process is in place.

### 3.5 Lessons from the Initiatives

70. The independence of the decision making by the SACCAR Board has demonstrated a regional grouping as an effective balance to the international centers and the CGIAR system. At the same time coherence and goodwill has been demonstrated by the parties to the preparation of the maize and cassava program under the West African initiative. Both have encouraged the Task Force. SACCAR as a regional grouping can operate as an interface for donors between national systems and international centers.

71. The West African initiative teaches lessons which some centers, particularly CIP and more recently CIAT, have already learned for themselves in sub-saharan Africa. Building a spirit of collaboration at the scientific level in a sub-region is not difficult when common interests are clear. A formal, official, organization is not a prerequisite to effective regional collaboration. IITA has demonstrated that an international center can respond effectively as an interface when national systems initiate a regional effort to meet common priorities.

72. The initiatives have taught clear lessons which, if learned, will move the national systems, international research centers and donors closer to coherent, complementary efforts in African agriculture research. The main message is the need for a demand driven process; from resource poor farmers, national systems, regional groupings, international centers, to articulate priority areas for international research efforts. Such a process demands national system initiative, early consultation, continuing dialogue and a real spirit of partnership. Operationally, to mobilize such a process a new funding mechanism is required which will allow national systems to express their felt needs and draw CGIAR skills and resources into partnership.

73. Finally, enhanced awareness and commitment is needed from African leaders to the key role of African agricultural development, and to the central importance of useful technology, undistorted policy and the sustainability of the resource base to this role. Only such a commitment will create the opportunity for a more coherent strategy and improved processes for assisting African agricultural research. Donors will require a coordinated effort, flexibility, and a clear understanding of the specific regional institutional and political circumstances, as well as the personalities, in identifying appropriate funding mechanisms.

74. Experiences with the three initiatives and extensive discussions among Task Force members, both in and out of the formal meetings, have prompted recommendations to the Group on strategy and processes to improve the effectiveness of help from the CGIAR System to African agriculture.

#### 4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GROUP FROM THE CGIAR TASK FORCE

##### 4.1 Introduction:

75. It is worth an initial underscoring that the concept of regional cooperation in research, particularly where there are many small countries, is an extremely powerful one. It allows a rational allocation of programs and cost effective use of limited manpower and budget resources. It does however require continuing longterm rights of access to results for the participating countries.

##### 4.2 IARC Regional Priorities

76. The recommendations set out assume regional cooperation in research as a working principle. Unlike the Bellagio Report which suggested additional CGIAR mechanisms for Africa, the Task Force recommends regional interfaces driven by the national systems, supported by donors, and assisted by the CGIAR, for improving the collaborative process between national and international systems.

77. Despite the generally favorable evolution of relationships between international and national agricultural research systems some tensions have been created in Africa. Each Center has developed its own regional model of operation, and there have been some unbalanced partnerships with national systems. Tensions have been prolonged by weak guidance from the CGIAR system and weak feedback from Africa to the system, on both the handling of priorities

in regional programs, and on their organization. It was only in the CGIAR Priorities Paper, published in 1987, that the need to accommodate national priorities when working within a country was explicitly acknowledged.

78. Because of the inherent advantages of a regional perspective on research in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Task Force recommends that the CGIAR should formulate policy that Centers reinforce national efforts towards the establishment of regional interfaces where interests across countries are clearly in common. In the absence of a formal regional body the Task Force would encourage national institutions to take the initiative. They are encouraged to establish mechanisms such as coordinating committees, or regional conferences, in order to promote communication and initiate collaborative work with the international centers.

79. A committee structure can provide a route not only for the IARCS to negotiate a program around regional priorities compatible with their own, but importantly, before negotiation with the IARCs, for the national systems to reconcile their own priorities for work at the regional level.

80. As in the case of the SACCAR Board, which could perform a committee role for the CGIAR system for the SADC Region, existing regional mechanisms driven by the national systems as the major stakeholders could be the interface between international and national systems. Where no regional committee exists it may evolve from existing coordinator/center committees at the initiative of either the national systems or the international centers.

#### 4.3 IARC Regional Activities

81. Some controversy has occurred in non-mandate specific activities in capacity building in which more than one Center has run the same line of training for similar country personnel. The Task Force recommends coordinating general training on a sub-regional basis. This "general" category should cover most research disciplines including breeding and agronomy. Few African national programs can afford technical scientists specialized by crop in anything but very advanced roles. Turnover in personnel and postings are rapid and general courses in the technical fields and the social sciences are more useful to many national systems.

82. The Committee of Center Directors has recently approved a move towards the regional coordination of some training activities. The Task Force welcomes and reinforces this decision. The Centers are encouraged to dialogue between themselves and with the national systems on the coordination of training activities within the sub-regions. Such collaborative training efforts would be more cost effective for the IARCs, and would help solve the dilemma of their moving upstream yet also needing better national capacity to improve partnership and to utilize Center outputs.

83. Most importantly the national systems need to be involved in defining the possible content and modalities for training operations and the responsibilities of the stakeholders. All parties should be working towards the same objectives.

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84. The burden imposed on national systems manpower by hosting center nurseries and trials will be reduced as the focus for the materials in any one set of trials is improved. Improvement in focus should result from the current efforts of the centers to develop an agro-ecological framework for, inter alia, planning international trials. As zones are defined it should help in two ways:

- by reducing the amount of material which enters the trials at any one site;
- by increasing the proportion of material likely to be relevant to the host country and collaborators in the region.

85. The Task Force recommends that if local sites are of great importance for a center's mandate but are outside country or regional priorities then they should be developed and run either by the center or on a fully contractual basis. The main objective of the activity should be clear to both sides, the proportionate benefits should be frankly assessed as a basis for the center compensating the national system for resources employed. Beyond funding, if manpower is scarce in the national system it should be supplemented by the Center. It is appropriate that the country weigh the other benefits it gets from the center in considering whether to host such activities, and whether to charge for its resources.

#### 4.4 Areas for inter-center collaboration

86. The Task Force recommends three areas for inter-center collaboration within a sub-region. First is the area already discussed for coordinated and collaborative regional efforts in non-mandate specific activities. Here one center could be designated as lead for each subregion or perhaps for each type of training or networking undertaken. Other centers might contribute staff time and operating funds.

87. Second is the need for joint projects where a priority regional problem demands input from more than one center -- an example is the improvement of the widespread maize/bean intercrop.

88. Finally, although perhaps too late in much of the continent, the use of umbrella legal agreements with national governments would reduce the overhead costs -- in both money and goodwill -- of introducing new center activities into the region. It would also bring some comparability to the terms and conditions under which centers operate. The simplest way would be for the centers to operate under a single agreement to which each new program or project would bring an additional annex.

89. The Task Force recognizes the value of the inputs from the Center Directors Standing Committee on Africa and recommends its involvement in the continuing dialogue with the African national systems.

#### 4.5 Aspects for CGIAR discussion and guidance

90. In addition to considering the recommendations of the Task Force at the level of the IARCs the CGIAR is asked to consider other recommendations at the system and donor levels.

91. The issues which prompted the establishment of the African Task Force arose in part from early guidance to centers from the CGIAR system that outposted staff should work on center priorities. Of the several aspects requiring fuller guidance, perhaps the most important is the reconciling of CGIAR and regional priorities.

92. The Task Force recommends wider discussion in the CGIAR of the need to be sensitive to national priorities when working in a region. How can a forward looking global perspective and the current problems of many countries best be reconciled in the programs of work followed by the centers?

93. The national systems themselves face essentially the same balancing act; how much of their resources to allocate to solving farmers current problems, how much to identifying and developing new opportunities in anticipation of future circumstances? A balance could be agreed between the national and international systems. Where they are operational such agreements could be made at regional interfaces.

94. Accepting the cost effective potential of regional research efforts the Task Force recommends the CGIAR system develops an explicit strategy for collaboration with formal or informal, nationally supported, regional mechanisms.

95. Finally, there are a set of issues for the CGIAR members as donors. One result of the West African Maize and Cassava initiative is an acceptance by IITA to seek donor funds under the authority of a sub-regional steering committee. In the context of the initiative driven by national system needs the Task Force sees this as a legitimate role for IITA. However the Task Force recommends further review by the CGIAR of the appropriate limits on the use of the Centers as channels for donor funds.

96. There is considerable pressure on Centers from donors to achieve impact in farmers fields with their research products. That such impact is dependent on a variety of institutions operating effectively is understood but underplayed in donor demands for results. The pressure leads Centers to mount their own field programs in adaptive research and on occasion into development activities in order to introduce new products to farmers.

97. Last, but importantly, is the question of donor coordination. The evidence to date suggests that coordination is urgently required not only across but within donor agencies so that multilateral, regional and bilateral sources of funds are disbursed to a common strategy to help African agricultural research and development. Such a strategy would also provide criteria for more appropriate evaluation of the performance of the different elements involved, including the Centers. The Task Force recommends this for further discussion by the Group and in SPAAR. The Task Force is pleased to see that SPAAR is currently being asked to provide funds for the Maize and Cassava Programs developed under the Task Force West African initiative.

98. There is now (1989) agreement that the environment must be conserved and that production systems must be developed that are sustainable. Policies must encourage farmers to produce at affordable prices and local institutions must be able to perform the tasks expected of them.

99. The Task Force was set up against the concern of African governments and the international community over the decline in per capita food production and consumption in many African countries. There was a strong sense of urgency and a view that the IARCs could and should play a greater role in the generation and transfer of technologies to farmers through working closer with each other and with national systems.

100. The programs of reform and structural adjustment designed to help countries overcome debt problems have done much to tune domestic policies. These same programs however have frequently resulted in reduced availability of inputs requiring foreign exchange, and reduced domestic expenditure on research and rural services. There are also indications that the funding available to the IARCs has also levelled off. At the same time population growth and the downward trend in food crop production have continued.

101. There remains the urgent need

- to generate, test and transfer technologies that will promote sustainable increases in production within the many different economic, social, political and ecological environments;
  - to develop and test mechanisms to promote coordination and collaboration between national, regional and international research institutions with due regard to their comparative advantage, reaction time, value for money and the need to strengthen African institutions;
- and
- for donors to find ways to coordinate their actions and modalities by which such new mechanisms may be resourced, tested and evaluated.

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CGIAR Task Force on Sub-Saharan Africa

List of Meetings

- |    |  |                |
|----|--|----------------|
| 1. | Paris, France,                         | September 1986 |
| 2. | ICW 86 Washington, D.C.,               | November 1986  |
| 3. | Harare, Zimbabwe,                      | February 1987  |
| 4. | ILRAD, Nairobi, Kenya,                 | June 1987      |
| 5. | Paris, France,                         | September 1987 |
| 6. | Midterm meeting, Berlin, West Germany, | May 1988       |
| 7. | ICW 88 Washington, D.C., USA,          | October 1988   |
| 8. | Paris, France,                         | September 1989 |

A preliminary meeting was held in Cali, Columbia in June 1986 at which draft terms of reference were drawn up.