

Summary of AGM04 Discussion and Decision on Review of CGIAR Partnership Committees¹

A review of CGIAR Partnership Committees conducted by an external panel chaired by Keith Bezanson was discussed at the May 2004 meeting of ExCo. The report which was distributed in advance of AGM may be accessed at http://www.cgiar.org/exco/exco6/exco6_review.cgiar_part_comm.pdf.

Following its discussion, ExCo submitted the following recommendation to the CGIAR:

ExCo adopted the following two-pronged approach as a way forward:

1. *The CGIAR Secretariat should draft a clear statement on the necessity for CGIAR engagement with all components of civil society to be incorporated into the CGIAR Charter. The statement would be sent to ExCo for endorsement before going to the CGIAR for final approval. The Charter would recognize that a range of partnerships are essential for success, and highlight the widespread collaboration at the Center level, missing at the System level.*
2. *Regarding the recommendations of the review:*
 - *On PSC (Private Sector Committee), adopt recommendation 8, “market testing” for 2-4 years.*
 - *On NGOC (Non-governmental Organizations Committee), send message on desire to re-establish dialogue. At the same time, strengthen ongoing initiatives with CSOs, such as innovation marketplace, SC initiatives, e-consultation on CGIAR-CSO linkage as pre-AGM activity, etc.*
 - *Develop an inventory of partnerships, study lessons learned and prepare a guide of best practices at the Center and System levels.*
 - *Draw from recommendation 3 to focus on the kinds of partnerships desired, costs, benefits, governance implications, and rules of engagement.*

ExCo also welcomed a proposal from GFAR to work to facilitate dialogue between CSOs and the CGIAR.

At AGM, F. Reifschneider noted that one of the two committees reviewed, the PSC, had provided a response to the review. The CGIAR approached and requested NGOC Co-chair, Patrick Mulvaney to address the Group but Mulvaney responded that he had resigned. A statement was also released which said that the NGOC was not the best way to bring NGO views to the table. Reifschneider said that a proposal to be presented during the discussion on timing of future AGMs will suggest a way to increase interactions with CSOs.

Ruth Haug and Mohamed Roozitalab, Co-chairs of the parallel session on “CGIAR Partnership Committees: Next Steps,” held during the Stakeholder Meeting, presented a summary of the discussion (see report in Attachment 2). Participants in the session

¹ Excerpt from AGM04 Business Meeting of the CGIAR (October 28-29, 2004) Summary Record of Proceedings, December 7, 2004.

agreed with the ExCo recommendation on PSC, but felt that future CSO interaction with the CGIAR should allow for farmers to be represented separately from NGOs. Identification of a focal point for CSOs in the CGIAR Secretariat was also suggested. M. Roozitalab noted that GFAR recently met with NGOs, and that GFAR could serve as a conduit for increased interaction between NGOs and the CGIAR. He said that several NGOs had supported this approach.

PSC Chair Usha Barwale noted that the PSC had issued a response to the review. It agrees with the ExCo recommendation of an examination on how PSC fits in and the value of the partnership and agrees that if it doesn't add value it shouldn't exist. She also requested there be a more formal mechanism for PSC inputs and views to be conveyed to the CGIAR. She noted with satisfaction that PSC was working together with CDC on a program of staff and knowledge exchange between the Centers and private sector. There was an expectation the program would start in 2005. Additional areas of joint work are also being explored.

Discussion:

Members agreed with ExCo's recommendation, and emphasized the need to maintain effective partnerships with CSOs including NGOs, farmers, and the private sector. The strong case made by farmers for a direct relationship between farmers organizations and the CGIAR was acknowledged. The report on UN (United Nations) civil society linkages commissioned by Secretary General Kofi Annan was suggested as a reference for possible options for consideration by the CGIAR.

Decision:

CGIAR endorsed the ExCo recommendations on Review of Partnership Committees and specifically agreed to:

PSC

- *Continue PSC in a "market testing" mode for 2-4 years, as recommended by the Review (recommendation 8).*

CSOs

Short term:

- *Continuation and expansion of outreach activities already underway (Innovation Marketplace, Farmers Dialogue, Farmers Exchange), including a CSO Forum in alternate years to precede the reformatted AGM.*
- *Consider establishing a focal point in the CGIAR Secretariat to facilitate CSO linkages with the CGIAR.*

Longer term:

- *Develop an inventory and typology of partnerships and prepare a guide of best practices.*
- *Further strengthen GFAR-CGIAR linkages, specifically in relation to farmers and other CSOs.*