

Summary of ExCo 8 Discussion and Recommendations to the CGIAR on SSA Task Forces on Programmatic and Structural/Organizational Alignment¹

J. de Haas, Co-Chair of the SSA Task Force on Structural/Organizational Alignment (TF2) reported on the work of both task forces and presented the five recommendations made jointly by the two TFs:

Recommendation 1: The TFs recommend that the CGIAR agree in principle, and put in place a process, to consolidate all CGIAR Centers and activities into one global corporate entity.

Recommendation 2: The TFs recommend that over the next 18 months and as a first step towards global restructuring of the System's operations, the CGIAR consolidate the Centers headquartered in SSA into two global entities: one in West and Central Africa (WCA), and the other in East and Southern Africa (ESA).

Recommendation 3: The TFs recommend that the CGIAR plan and implement its research activities focused on SSA through two MTPs, one for WCA and the other for ESA.

Recommendation 4: The TFs recommend that the CGIAR commission other task forces to identify programmatic and structural alignment needs and opportunities in the remaining regions

Recommendation 5: The TFs recommend that the CGIAR take the following actions for implementing the stepwise structural reform suggested in this report:

- i. During the interim period until the formation of the above recommended SSA based global entities, request CDC/CBC to develop in partnership with the SROs and NARS sub-regional MTPs for SSA, starting with CY2006.*
- ii. Request the SC to review the MTPs and submit commentaries to the ExCo which will perform oversight function on their implementation;*
- iii. Request the Boards of IITA and WARDA to form a CGIAR global entity in West and Central Africa, starting with the establishment of a single Board;*
- iv. Establish, in cooperation with ICRAF and ILRI Boards, a CGIAR global entity in East and Southern Africa, following a corporate model and with ILRI and ICRAF as its initial constituent units.*

J. de Haas clarified that, although stated as a recommendation, Recommendation 1 reflects the TFs' collective vision of what is desirable. It is stated first in order to place the SSA-related recommendations in a futuristic context.

¹ Excerpt from Eighth Meeting of the CGIAR Executive Council (May 11-12, 2005) Summary Record of Proceedings, May 31, 2005.

P. Pinstруп-Andersen, Co-chair of the SSA Task Force on Programmatic Alignment, highlighted several points:

- The TFs spent a great deal of time on programmatic issues, before they considered structural concerns. As the report notes, programmatic problems in SSA are serious and demand urgent attention by the CGIAR.
- The TFs identified and discussed several other options in addition to those reflected in the recommendations. These included, (a) having only one center for SSA, (b) having five regional programs for the CGIAR, (c) asking the Centers collectively to take responsibility for addressing integration, coordination and efficiency problems faced in SSA. Each had its own advantages and disadvantages, but, on balance, what is recommended was considered, unanimously, as the best option for the CGIAR.
- The TFs stressed building on the existing structures, rather than replacing them.
- The recommended alignment should help facilitate the CGIAR work in SSA.
- As the report notes, none of the recommendations made since the mid-1980s on aligning CGIAR research in SSA have been implemented. As a result, the CGIAR would risk losing credibility if action is not taken on this occasion.

Following the presentation, the Chair noted the tremendous amount of strategic and intellectual thinking that went into the report and commended the work of the TFs. He thanked everyone who has been involved in the exercise.

Discussion:

- Recommendation 1 is a long term vision and should be discussed separately. A more in depth risk-benefit analysis would be needed for such a discussion.
- Members expressed general agreement with the analysis in the report, especially on the diagnosis of problems.
- There was also general support for Recommendations 3 (having two MTPs for SSA), 4 (commissioning TFs for other regions), and 5(i) and 5(ii) (initiating the MTP process through the Centers and having them reviewed by the SC).
- The first part of Recommendation 2 (alignment of IITA and WARDA into a CGIAR WCA Global Entity) received broad support from CGIAR Members. It was recognized that implementation required close consultation and coordination with not only the Boards of IITA and WARDA, but also WARDA's Council of Ministers.
- Regarding the second part of Recommendation 2, while agreeing with the need to form a complementary CGIAR ESA Global Entity, some members questioned whether ICRAF and ILRI were the right Centers to form the nucleus of this entity. It may not be prudent to lock the System into a configuration which would limit the degrees of freedom available to the CGIAR when it considers alignment possibilities in the rest of the System. Further clarification is needed from the TFs on the rationale for the recommended alignment.
- Maintaining the global mandates of the components of both recommended sub-regional Centers is crucial, and the role of both Centers as "facilitators" for system-wide efforts in Africa is key to the success of the recommended alignment.

- The MTP process needs to be meaningful in order to serve as mechanism for delivering change.
- The CBC and CDC representatives offered an alternative scenario, with five elements: (1) developing a global vision and strategy for the CGIAR and one for SSA; (2) initiating annual multi-Center priority setting consultations with SSA partners; (3) developing sub-regional MTPs that integrate and streamline CGIAR Center activities; (4) developing a mechanism to oversee the implementation of the MTPs through a director; (5) integrating research support and corporate services in ESA and WCA. The Centers would collectively take responsibility for implementing this scenario.
- The Chairman cautioned against pursuing two separate, parallel processes for reform in SSA, which would be unhealthy for the CGIAR. The Chair of the CBC responded by noting that one of the TF co-chairs had welcomed the introduction of new scenarios. He did not see its presentation as a “separate, parallel process.” An ExCo member stated that the presented scenario deserved to be considered. The CBC Chair indicated that the scenario provided solutions to some of the issues raised, e.g. who is to implement the MTP and how? Several members saw the Centers’ alternative proposal as an expensive (costly and time-consuming) undertaking, and therefore starting with SSA, as requested by the CGIAR at AGM03, seemed more practical.
- Franklin Moore (USAID), a member of TF2, remarked that the TFs made an effort to balance pragmatic considerations with the need for improved governance arrangements for the Centers and the System. The two models recommended minimize upheaval and preserve existing operating units. In this sense they are different from the ISNAR experience and the merger of ILRAD and ILCA into ILRI.
- There is a need for more clarification about other options reviewed by the TFs and elaboration on reasons for not pursuing them.

Conclusions and ExCo Recommendations to the CGIAR:

- *Considering the TFs’ presentation to ExCo and their clear indication that Recommendation 1 was indicative of their vision of the future, ExCo recommends that Recommendation 1 is placed separately on the agenda of AGM05, subject to CGIAR Members’ interest in the topic. ExCo requests the CGIAR Secretariat to hold informal consultations with the membership to ascertain Members’ interest.*
- *ExCo requests the TF Co-Chairs to revise the draft report to include scenarios that were considered in their exercise, and their views on each option.*
- *ExCo requests Centers to continue to develop the sub-regional MTPs, at a faster pace, including the elements required for full and effective facilitation. This should be done in partnership with SROs, NARS, and FARA, with implementation to start in 2006. CDC/CBC, CGIAR Centers and their staff with a particular interest in SSA, should strive for ownership and full engagement of NARS, SROs and FARA in the process. ExCo requests that Centers organize a dialogue with the above institutions between now and ExCo 9. ExCo further requests that MTPs are fully aligned with the System priorities and fully consistent with the SSA Challenge Program currently under implementation. As noted by the TFs in*

Recommendation 5(i), the Centers should carry out this responsibility “during the interim period until the formation of the recommended SSA-based global entities.”

- *ExCo recommends that the CGIAR endorses Recommendation 2 as related to West and Central Africa and further requests the CGIAR Chair to take necessary actions to discuss with the Board Chairs of IITA and WARDA and WARDA’s Council of Ministers, steps towards implementation of this recommendation.*
- *ExCo recognizes the need for further discussions and analysis of best options for the East and Southern Africa Global Entity, and requests Members to specifically share with ExCo their views on options for discussion at ExCo 9 in October 2005.*
- *With regard to Recommendation 4, ExCo recommends this to be discussed at AGM05 as part of the discussion on Recommendation 1.*

ExCo’s recommendations will be submitted to the CGIAR for approval on a no-objection basis.