

CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY
Third General Assembly of the Centers
30 and 31 January 2019, CIFOR, Bogor, Indonesia

Purpose:

This document presents a summary of proceedings at the 3rd General Assembly of the Centers, setting out the decisions taken and providing some highlights across the main agenda items. Agreed actions are provided in a companion document that is an internal working document of the Centers.

Meeting Co-Chairs:

- **Nicole Birrell**, 2017, 2018 and 2019 Convener CGIAR Center Board of Trustees' Chairs
- **Matthew Morell**, 2017 and 2018 Convener of CGIAR Center Directors General

Prepared by: System Management Office under the direction of the Co-Chairs.

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A. Executive Summary

The 3rd General Assembly of CGIAR Centers once again served as a valuable opportunity for CGIAR's Centers to come together to share achievements and emerging plans, and to discuss items related to broader operations of the CGIAR System and CGIAR System Organization as a whole. By design, and with thanks to colleagues' pre-meeting inputs, the program focused on continuing to build on the overall positive direction of the System that we collectively worked together to strengthen in 2018, as well as providing an opportunity for an open discussion on some areas where better clarification could help to further strengthen our collective roles and relationships.

Whilst recognizing that information is continually shared during the year through many different channels, it was clear that colleagues highly appreciate the importance of the General Assembly being a pivotal opportunity each year when, as a collective group of Centers, we can receive and discuss updates on past activities and achievements of the System Organization - both the System Management Board and the System Management Office – and turn our attention to providing reflections on plans and priorities for the coming year. This is clearly an important feature of the General Assembly meeting and we realize that more time needs to be devoted to this in future, with the desire expressed for more structured information being provided on the System Management Board element of that update to facilitate a more interactive conversation on lessons learned from the preceding year's operations and areas of focus for the current year.

Recognizing that the 2019 year ahead will see considerable focus by the System Organization on delivering on its tasks set out in the [CGIAR System 2019-2021 Business Plan](#), we particularly welcomed information shared on overall System funding, trends and forecasts, demonstrating the significant effort being made by the System Management Office to retain and, wherever possible, grow the 'System' component of funding.

A truly inspiring session was the one that took stock of and looked at further evolving of Center strategic engagement initiatives. With appreciation to the Centers that presented on the three strategic alignment initiatives in progress, we would reiterate the congratulations from the General Assembly to Bioversity and CIAT, CIFOR and ICRAF, and AfricaRice and IRRI for the major steps they have taken towards various models of strategic alignment. It is noteworthy that members explored and showed commitment to developing other forms of Shared Services between multiple Centers which would, in different ways, also represent strategic alignment.

Looking towards the 2022-2030 period, it was valuable for the General Assembly to undertake a workshop-style scoping exercise to start to identify the various important principles and elements to consider when seeking to structure a forward-looking '2030 Plan' (being Item 10 of the CGIAR System 2019-2021 Business Plan). The suggested principles that emerged from that discussion are clearly valuable contributions to the work being undertaken this year under the stewardship of the System Management Board to help shape the future Portfolio, which work we agreed must necessarily be undertaken according to a clear engagement process that brings in the System as a whole.

As is becoming a true strength of this forum, the General Assembly again took time for each individual Center to share highlights on specific topics. This year the focus was on learning about Centers' approaches to private sector engagement as well as the practices being used by Centers to proactively ensure a more diverse workforce within a supportive operating environment. With positive experiences having been shared, it was recognized that this type of sharing helps to expose new opportunities and opens up a discussion on whether and how any particular approaches could be adopted as part of efforts to operate more effectively as a System.

This year in addition to working dinners for the Board of Trustees' Chairs and the Directors General (now a standing feature of the General Assembly schedule), the two groups maximized the opportunity of all 15 of their peers being in the one place to also hold pre-GA3 meetings to discuss a range of topics within their group. It seems that this extra engagement is welcomed, and a full day is planned to be built into the 2020 schedule for both groups.

Importantly, key business items of the General Assembly as articulated in the [Charter of the CGIAR System Organization](#) were also discussed and agreed, and these are set out in the record of [Formal Decisions](#) taken. As is practice from our past meetings, the [Agreed Actions](#) from the meeting will accompany this document in a separate rolling action register which remains as an internal working document of the Centers. As Co-Chairs for a second year running, we were happy that most of the actions agreed during the 2nd General Assembly were completed, with others well underway. Our hope is that the agreed actions from this meeting will be closely monitored by the 2019 Co-Chairs - as they represent important System-wide initiatives that we as Centers have proposed to lead. Looking further into 2019, interest was registered for more opportunities to engage collectively as Centers – for example, the Centers' Boards of Trustees' Chairs are considering a mid-year meeting and there will be additional information shared on whether that may become a possibility.

The wonderful setting, well-organized facilities and proactive staff support of CIFOR were very much appreciated in contributing to the smooth running of the General Assembly meeting. We would also like to recognize the ongoing support provided by the System Management Office to the General Assembly Co-Chairs in helping to document our agenda and meetings.

As the [Attendees list in Annex 1](#) shows, we welcomed some new faces to this group in 2019. However, we also bid farewell to several Board of Trustees Chairs and Directors General who will finish their service before the fourth General Assembly meeting in 2020. Whilst most will still be working with us for a good proportion of the year ahead, we certainly didn't want to miss the opportunity to thank them for their friendship and contributions to the CGIAR System over past years and extend them all the best in their future endeavors.

In closing, as Matthew hands over the role of Directors General Convener to Aly for 2019, we express our appreciation once again for the constructive, proactive spirit of our 3rd General Assembly meeting.

Sincerely, Nicole Birrell & Matthew Morell

B. Formal Decisions taken

The formal decisions taken by the General Assembly are documented below, arranged into three main categories.

I. GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPERATIONS

GA/M3/DP1: Adopting the Agenda

The General Assembly **adopted** the Agenda dated 16 January 2019.

GA/M3/DP2: Receiving reports to the General Assembly

Pursuant to item D4 of the [Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly](#), the General Assembly **received** the reports of the Chair of the System Management Board and of the Executive Director of the System Organization.

GA/M3/DP3: Electing Center representatives for 2019

Pursuant to item D1.ii of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, **the General Assembly elected the following two persons as Conveners** of the respective groups, and thus Co-Chairs of the General Assembly through to end of GA4 in early 2020:

- Nicole Birrell, Convener of the Chairs of Center Boards of Trustees
- Aly Abousabaa, Convener of the Center Directors General

GA/M3/DP4: General Assembly timing and location

The General Assembly **agreed** that the most optimal timing for the 4th in-person meeting of the General Assembly of the Centers would be in early February and accepted the invitation by IRRI to host the 4th General Assembly at its headquarters in Los Baños, The Philippines.

II. SMB MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

GA/M3/DP5: Composition of the System Management Board

As a follow-up to the General Assembly decision (GA/M2/DP9) to change the documented composition of the System Management Board to a 6:3 model of Center-affiliated members and independent members¹, the General Assembly **agreed** that a preferred model for the composition of the System Management Board would be 3:3:3 across the categories of

¹ Article 7.2 of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, amended with effect from Thursday 12 April 2018 after approval by the System Management Board and the System Council

independent members: voting Center Boards of Trustees members: Center Directors General, subject to skills needs requiring a different balance and with a requirement that there be at least 2 Board of Trustees members and 2 Director General members of the System Management Board.

GA/M3/DP6: Renewal of System Management Board Membership terms

The General Assembly:

- A. **Took note** that for 2018 the Nominations Committee adopted the proposal from the System Management Board's Rules of Governance Working Group that all members could be renewed for up to 4 years, with Center Directors General requiring a 2-year break between their first and second 2-year terms having regard to the significant workload of Directors General for their affiliated Centers; and
- B. **Endorsed** as a preferred model, but not a formal rule, that there be a 2-year break for Directors General, taking note that efforts by the Centers' System Management Board Nominations Committee to achieve an appropriate balance in skills and membership, may require flexibility in the application of the preferred model.

GA/M3/DP7: Nominations Process for System Management Board membership

Recognizing the importance of an effective nominations function in determining membership of the System Management Board, the General Assembly:

- A. **Endorsed the report of the 2018 Nominations Committee** as presented during the 3rd General Assembly of the Centers;
- B. **Agreed** to retain a Nominations Committee approach to System Management Board voting member selection; and
- C. **Endorsed** the principles of
 - i. maintaining some common membership in the Nominations Committee every year;
 - ii. ensuring as much diversity of membership as possible;
 - iii. always including one of CGIAR's key partners as an independent member in the Nominations Committee;
 - iv. nominees needing to have consented to their name being included on a list, without raising expectations of guaranteed appointment;
 - v. maintaining the enhanced process from 2018 of separating the Center-affiliated member from the independent member process;
 - vi. carrying out one voting round to enhance timeliness and clarity for independent members; and
 - vii. continuing with the current rule that to bring diversity to the System Management Board, no two persons can be affiliated with the same Center (noting that System Management Board members work in the interests of the System, and do not represent any individual Center or stakeholder).

GA/M3/DP8: Appointing the 2019 System Management Board Nominations Committee

Pursuant to item D1.i of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, **the General Assembly appointed the following 4 persons to the 2019 SMB Nominations Committee**, taking note that the Nominations Committee will self-select a Chair from amongst themselves and identify an independent member from the next-in-line partner organization as part of the rotation process agreed for partners:

Continuing members:

- Gareth Johnstone (Director General, World Fish)
- Jim Godfrey (Board of Trustees member, IRR)

New members:

- Shenggen Fan (Director General, IFPRI)
- Martyn Jeggo (Board of Trustees member, ILRI)

III. CGIAR SYSTEM MATTERS

GA/M3/DP9: CGIAR System Framework and Charter nomenclature changes

Pursuant to item D5 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, the General Assembly **approved** the proposed nomenclature changes to the CGIAR System Framework and Charter of the CGIAR System arising from the adoption by the System Council of new terms of reference for its advisory bodies and its Shared Secretariat as set out in meeting document GA3-04.

C. Actions Agreed

The Actions agreed during the third General Assembly, including the details of each action to be carried out, the responsibility for the action and the expected timing for the action, are documented in Appendix I, a separate internal working file of the Centers. Actions following on from decisions taken are linked according to the three categories used in recording the decisions above for ease of cross referencing.

D. Highlights from discussions in Bogor

1. In Agenda Item 1-Opening, the 2018 Co-Chairs welcomed the members of the General Assembly of the Centers and other participants. With several 'new faces', the meeting started with a 'tour de table' asking each participant to share their main aspiration for the meeting. The list of attendees is set out in Annex 1.
2. The Co-Chairs proposed two additional items to be covered in the agenda including discussions on (i) the CGIAR Business Plan (2019-2021) and (ii) governance relationships between Center Boards and Directors General and the System Management Board. No other items were proposed by General Assembly members.
3. The agenda was adopted (**GA/M3/DP1**).
4. For Agenda Item 2- recapping 2018 experiences and successes, reflections, reports, and observations were shared from across the 2018 year – including reflections from the 2nd General Assembly, the Chair of the System Management Board, the Executive Director of the System Organization, and major decisions of the System Council.
5. Observations were also provided from the pre-GA3 meetings of the Board of Trustees Chairs and Directors General on Tuesday 29 January 2019, as follows:

a. From the Board of Trustees Chairs	b. From the Directors General
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good progress made but key issues still to be addressed around CGIAR brand/ narrative (need an irresistible offering), business model, positioning with NARS and others, delivery mechanisms for our 'products' • Perspectives on 2019-21 Business Plan: what, why and how. Lessons learned for developing the '2030 Plan' (including stepping back and answering key threshold questions before launching into the Plan itself; and mode of Boards'/Board Chairs' participation in its development) • Centers/ Boards need to take more ownership of the CGIAR 'agenda' and responsibility for driving it forward. • Bring back 'Centers Day' or similar, to enhance direct contact between Centers as a group and the System's Funders • Funders' perception of Boards' relative cost/ contribution requires attention • Need for better Board Chairs visibility of / buy-in to System processes/ decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased thinking as a system, improved mechanisms • Moving at a rapid pace forward • Need to reflect on how the movement translates into substantial increase in funding • Need to be particles (Centers) and part of a wave (System) at the same time; challenge is how to seamlessly connect between the two states of being in a way that is successful • Center viability, financial issues, policy and procedural issues • Shared Services to be considered as a means of achieving alignment, including in situations where an alliance is not the appropriate course • Costs, finance; transaction costs. We are a transaction cost heavy system. Need to talk about opportunity costs; consequences of opportunity costs when re-shaping the Portfolio

a. From the Board of Trustees Chairs	b. From the Directors General
<p>making to ensure success: enhance working relationship between Boards and SMB/SMO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline Center reporting to System • Management of IP needs more attention (from both a risk and an opportunity perspective) • Interest in an additional face-to-face meeting of BCs during this crucial year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of Centers and Directors General in shaping directions we are taking forward • Centers need to be driving this conversation, this is our future. Must be engaged in shaping portfolio and 2030 Plan • Governance of the system - weighting and roles. SC and SMB. What is the role of the General Assembly - what are we empowered and tasked to do?

6. The report of the Chair of the System Management Board (**GA/M3/DP2, Part 1A, Revision 1**) presented by Marco Ferroni highlighted both some achievements of the Board during 2018 as well as some lessons and ongoing challenges that it would continue to address into 2019.²
7. The report from the Executive Director of the System Organization (**GA/M3/DP2, Part 1B**), presented by Elwyn Grainger-Jones highlighted some of the following themes:
- a. Self-assessment of main areas of work of the System Management Office during 2018 with the majority of key performance indicators (KPIs) achieved and a few still in progress
 - b. Some key successes in 2018 around strategy and operations, financial, programmatic and engagement and support areas
 - c. An in-depth look into funding trends, 2018 situation and future forecasts
 - d. Establishing a clearer brand & communications strategy for @CGIAR
 - e. Outlining some of the challenges during 2018
 - f. Looking into 2019 sharing some aspirations for the year overall and some specific KPIs for the System Management Office that represent 'steady-state' activities as well as those that will specifically support the implementation of the CGIAR Business Plan (2019-2021)
8. In Agenda item 3 the General Assembly took stock of Center strategic engagement initiatives and discussed ways of further evolving them including on:
- a. Strategic alignment initiatives in progress (Alliances/Mergers/Strategic Partnerships)
 - b. How to optimize joint branding and collective communication
 - c. Good practice in private sector engagement

² Based on feedback provided during the meeting, a more detailed report from the SMB Chair is now available on Diligent Boards.

9. Updates and lessons from strategic alignment initiatives in progress were presented by Board Chairs and Directors General from:
 - a. Bioversity and CIAT
 - b. CIFOR and ICRAF
 - c. AfricaRice and IRRI

10. The discussion that followed the presentations provided an opportunity for the General Assembly members to better understand the processes involved and for key lessons to emerge from across the three different routes being taken for strategic alignment. It was discussed that while these are excellent models for the Centers involved, alliances are not the answer to every issue of fragmentation and that a more cohesive System could also be achieved through other approaches, with shared services offering an important entry-point for some or all the Centers depending on the service.

11. Echoing comments made during the session, the Co-Chairs offered congratulations to the Centers involved for taking such substantial and innovative steps towards greater strategic alignment. Taking note of Funder interest in the ongoing operational and strategic alliance conversations, the System Management Board's provision of space to the relevant Centers to take these bold actions themselves, was noted as having been appreciated.

12. Turning attention to the lessons and emerging good practice from Centers' private sector engagement, the Co-Chairs asked each Center to provide an example or highlight from efforts to engage with the private sector. The discussion following this exercise revealed some key points:
 - a. Engagement with the private sector is proving to be one that is primarily centered around a pathway for impact, and not simply income generation.
 - b. Engagement with the private sector involves exploring use of intellectual assets and the intellectual property rights generated from them in different ways.
 - c. When talking about private sector there is a tendency to focus on industrial private sector, but there is a wider and more inclusive definition which for example includes all smallholder dairy farmers. Therefore, there is a need to have clearer nomenclature and messaging on this.
 - d. Recognizing the value of information sharing, it was important to find a structured way to capture and harvest these lessons, and a way to track these experiences and learn from them.
 - e. A question relevant for 2030 Plan - what models can we capture from these examples?

13. It was noted that several actions had emerged during the Centers' Private Sector Partnerships for Impact Acceleration workshop (10-12 July 2018), which should be progressed. The General Assembly felt it was important for the System Management Office to help re-invigorate the process that was started and to help the CGIAR System learn from IFAD and other development players.

14. As part of the session element focused on lessons and emerging good practice from Centers' private sector engagement, an example of commitment to public/private sector partnership was provided through a video message on partnership activities from Corteva.
15. Given the recognized role of private sector engagement at the System level, the General Assembly felt that it was important for the System Organization to have a policy on private sector engagement, to institute a process of due diligence and to keep a register of system level private sector engagements. (See Agreed Actions in separate Appendix I).
16. In Agenda Item 4 the focus was on collective and common systems and actions, which would be tracked as the System's 2019-2021 CGIAR Business Plan is implemented including:
 - a. CGIAR position statements
 - b. Enhanced country level collaboration
 - c. Shared corporate services initiatives
17. Matthew Morell provided an update on CGIAR position statements including gene editing, biotechnology and dematerialization, which were actions from the 2nd General Assembly (GA/M2/AP-01 & 02 & 03). The General Assembly was informed that revised versions of position statements on gene editing and biotechnology were received at the time of GA3 and have been shared via Diligent Boards³. These would need to be reviewed and endorsed by the General Assembly in due course.
18. On a procedural note, it was recommended by some members that adequate time be given for the review of documents by the General Assembly. Additionally, given that some matters may be highly technical in their content, that assurance be provided on the cover note of such documents that some form of technical review or consultation through the relevant community of practice has been undertaken before being presented to the General Assembly.
19. On the topic of country level collaboration, Matthew Morell provided summarized recent steps, noting that country collaboration is included in the CGIAR System's 2019-2021 Business Plan, as supported by a companion document that has also been shared with the System Council at its 7th meeting (November 2018). Providing feedback from that meeting, it was noted that the System Council was not convinced the initiative was as yet developed to its full potential, with inputs being provided on possible areas to explore. Recognizing that the General Assembly appreciates the importance of this, Matthew proposed that a mechanism should be found to move this forward and the setting up of a task group was agreed.

³ Note that 'Diligent Boards' is an application that has been rolled out by the System Management Office for all Board of Trustees Chairs and Directors general to better facilitate information sharing. If support is required, please contact smb-secretariat@cgiar.org

20. Barbara Wells introduced the topic of shared corporate service initiatives, reflecting on opportunities for common practices for a variety of functions and business practices. Several principles were outlined for guiding the way forward in this area including:
 - a. Not trying to do everything at once
 - b. Cost savings and efficiency are good
 - c. Sharing information and practices is vital for finding opportunities and making them work
 - d. Strengthening the mandate and operation of key communities of practice
 - e. Build on some of the good examples of Shared Services that are already working including journal subscriptions, software licenses, common standards and policies, financial guidelines, CRPs, Office365, MEL/MARLO now being interoperable. IP systems that are shared country and regional services: e.g. Beca Hub
 - f. For some shared services which may not be seen to be operating optimally, e.g. OCS, there is a need to consider whether such tools/processes are being used properly or to full potential
 - g. Need to explore how to make even better use of some existing shared services, for example AIARC.
21. As a way forward on this topic, it was proposed that a taskforce be formed, led by Barbara Wells to look at both the 'low hanging fruit' as well as elements further into the 'discomfort zone' of what we can be doing together, towards building a business case to take to System Council to show some real movement on cost savings and opportunities.
22. During the discussion that followed, there was also:
 - a. A request for an update on the Rome Hub, which was provided by Elwyn Grainger-Jones.
 - b. A question of whether there could be some form of financial services that could be explored as a shared service.
23. During Agenda item 5, the General Assembly turned its attention to how the System might best structure a forward-looking research agenda – as a precursor to more detailed conversations during 2019 on the '2030 Plan' (Action 10 from the CGIAR System's 2019-2021 Business Plan).
24. Providing some framing for the session in his role as Convener of the Directors General, Matthew Morell presented some outcomes of a preliminary discussion on this topic held during the pre-GA3 Directors General's meeting, which included the following points:
 - a. A review of the current system concluded that there was a need to:
 - i. Build on positives of the current system in which there is a clear, coherent research agenda where the whole is more than the sum of the parts, with

Flagships as the basic units and improved ways of working together, including through unified System reporting.

- ii. Address some of the challenges in the current System, which includes a research agenda that is not completely linked to the [SDGs](#), nor offering enough choice for CGIAR's Funders, needing a better more compelling narrative on CGIAR's comparative advantage, and finding ways to take unnecessary expense out of the System's governance mechanisms.
- b. Looking towards a new Portfolio in the future, the following should be considered:
- i. A new 'set-up' for the Portfolio, while keeping strong elements
 - ii. The need for a 'lean and mean' "System"
 - iii. Strategic evaluations to inform decision making on the Portfolio
 - iv. While it is key to listen to Funders and stakeholders in the process, the leadership needs to come from the Centers
 - v. A refresh of the [CGIAR 2016-2030 Strategy and Results Framework](#) (SRF) can be achieved through the '2030 Plan' – there's no need to redo the SRF itself
 - vi. The narrative needs to cover a broader environmental and dietary framework
 - vii. Important to benchmark CGIAR with others external to the System
 - viii. We need a big idea for a compelling narrative
 - ix. Key for a new Portfolio will be content, structure (whether flagships or otherwise), finance and administration.
 - x. Champion ambassadors are needed in this process
25. The Co-Chairs asked members, in their table groups, to develop some key principles which would help to guide the formation of a new portfolio, which were reported back and discussed in [Agenda item 9](#) on day 2, with a synthesis emerging around the following:
- a. Ensuring [CGIAR ownership](#) while encouraging [strong partnerships](#)
 - b. Developing a [compelling narrative](#)
 - c. Finding the right [modality](#) to operate and deliver
 - d. Finding the [right tool](#) to avoid both fragmentation and overlap
 - e. Identifying the appropriate [scope](#)
 - f. Defining the [goals and direction](#) (whether SRF, SDG or both)
 - g. [Planning wider consultations](#) with key stakeholders to bring in important views is crucial (e.g. Funder views not only from SC but newer/different set)
 - h. Adopting a macro perspective with a [clear vision](#)
 - i. Building on a robust [stock-take](#)
 - j. Adopting a substantial re-think, balancing [integrating new issues/approaches](#) while focusing on [comparative advantage](#)
26. As a follow-up to this exercise, the General Assembly requested the System Management Office to develop a draft engagement process for the development of the new Portfolio that brings in the whole System, which process sets out a clear timeline for the development of the new portfolio, including key consultations and decision steps.

27. After the close of day 1, as Agenda item 6, the Board Chairs and Directors General met for separate working dinners to continue group specific conversations and business.
28. At the start of day 2, participants were guided on a tour of the CIFOR campus by the Director General, Robert Nasi, to learn more about CIFOR's work and its facilities.
29. Returning to the main meeting agenda as Agenda item 7, the Conveners of the Board Chairs and the Directors General provided items of note from the working dinners including taking note of outcomes on representative roles by the two groups, with relevant items to be included in the formal decision-making session later in the day:
- a. **Board Chairs' representative roles:**
- **2019 Convener** – Nicole Birrell (backed up by Roberto Lenton for System Council meetings if convener unavailable)
 - **Proposed 2019 SMB Nominations Committee members** – Jim Godfrey & Martyn Jeggo
 - **2019 Board Orientation Program:**
 - i. Convener: Jim Godfrey
 - ii. Participation fee – to be advised after Jim Godfrey's review of CGIAR Centers' Board Orientation Program account balance (approx. US\$ 60,000)⁴ and inscriptions for 2019. Dates: Monday 23 - 26 September 2019
- b. **Directors General**
- **2019 Convener** – Aly Abousabaa
 - **Proposed 2019 SMB Nominations Committee members** – Gareth Johnstone & Shenggen Fan
 - **Other representative roles:**
 - i. **Article 15 Centers of the ITPGFRA** – Juan Lucas Restrepo (from March 2019)
 - ii. **ASARECA** – Nteranya Sanginga
 - iii. **FARA** – Harold Roy Macauley
 - iv. **APAARI** – CIP term ended Dec 2018 - ***Discussion needed on CGIAR engagement, as to whether this is a 'System' representation or Center [**Current APAARI rules are very prescriptive of membership from CGIAR Centers]***
30. The General Assembly then turned its focus in Agenda Item 8 to driving improved gender equality in CGIAR's workplaces, with the session framed by a presentation from Claudia Sadoff, one of the CGIAR System Management Board's two Gender Champions, which set out:

⁴ Held in trust by the System Organization, but accounted for separately

- a. Background and Context around gender in the CGIAR workplace including noting the **high level of commitment** to strengthening gender equality in CGIAR's workplaces, along with elevating gender equality in CGIAR's research.
 - b. The System Council's strong request made in November 2018 that the Centers do everything possible to achieve a **minimum of 35% representation of women across all professional roles by end-2020**, reflecting a finding from the April 2017 published independent evaluation on Gender in the Workplace that the earlier proposed target by CGIAR of having 45 percent of women across all professional roles and 50 percent in senior professional and management roles by 2020 was unrealistic.⁵ An update on progress will be provided at the Council's 8th meeting (May 2019), based on end-2018 data disaggregated by Center, with the support of Centers' Human Resources teams.
 - c. A key focus of the CGIAR System's 2019-2021 Business Plan is to develop and implement a **CGIAR 'Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Framework'** building on the progressive efforts undertaken across CGIAR since 2010. The **Community of Practice of Human Resources professionals from the Centers will lead** this work and the development of a People Management Strategy, supported by a **Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Business Partner** jointly supervised by the HR Community of Practice and the System Organization (under recruitment and to be employed by the System Organization for and on behalf of the System for an initial 2-year term as agreed with the System Management Board).
 - d. A Gender & Diversity Progress and 'Snapshot' as of 30 November 2018 and a look at the status against a proposed target of 35% female representation by 2020.
 - e. Posing some key questions around vision and aspirations, processes and practices and objectives and targets.
31. The ensuing discussion, chaired by Geoff Hawtin, the second of the System Management Board's Gender Champions, highlighted the following:
- a. The gender pay gap issue also needs to be addressed and it would be interesting to know how many Centers are monitoring the gender pay gap and the approach they are taking.
 - b. A need to collect data in wider sets of categories than the ones presented in the gender snapshot - data collection should cover all staffing categories.
 - c. A need to recognize imbalances at other levels like support staff which are mostly women.

⁵ <http://iea.cgiar.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Summary-Report-CGIAR-Gender-at-workplace.pdf>

- d. A need to be able to look across categorization of staff in a comparable and meaningful way, and some of the initiatives (e.g. Single-spine) ongoing across the Centers may be an opportunity to look at mapping of categorization.
 - e. Ensuring awareness that the divide between international and national staff is also a key issue in staffing diversity and the work environment.
32. After hearing from each Center in turn on the objectives and targets they have around gender and diversity more broadly and providing an indication of how these are currently being met, there was a wider discussion on the processes and practices that are being employed to achieve more diverse staffing in Centers and an operational environment that supports the recruitment and retention of that diverse staffing. Several interesting practices were highlighted including providing access to on-site creches, feeding rooms, elongation of parental (primarily maternity) leave, and better monitoring of recruitment processes particularly in terms of the short lists to ensure a diverse candidate pool, and diversity amongst members of recruitment panels.
33. Signaling the importance to the System Council of the representation target of 35% women in all professional categories as an indicator that CGIAR is committed to strengthening gender equality in the workplace, there was a robust discussion on what formal target should be adopted and how this should optimally be reported on to the System Council at its 8th meeting taking place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in May 2019. It was noted that there are strong expectations coming from funders who have adopted gender strategies and targets, such as ACIAR's 40-40-20 representation target (with others adopting this, including some CGIAR Centers), that CGIAR could consider adopting. There was strong support for targets to be aspirational but with achievable timelines, and for more information to be shared on the various strategies being used across the System to create solid foundations for diversity in the individual organizations.
34. It was agreed that the HR Community of Practice should be mandated to transform reporting on gender diversity, and to identify good practices, particularly with the Directors General to convey to HR leaders the General Assembly's commitment to:
- a. Transparency in gender diversity in all roles irrespective of level;
 - b. Collection and use of more accurate information, with the recommendation to use the Birches' materials to assist with harmonization of categories to ensure that meaningful comparable data can be presented; and
 - c. The importance of collecting and sharing good practices on attracting and retaining women - what works, what hasn't worked, and where are the lessons to support the work to move towards increased diversity.
35. In Agenda item 10, the Centers-only session provided an opportunity for a review of the engagement with the System Management Office and the System Management Board without members from either being present. A key theme was to explore the possibilities for a closer engagement with the System Management Board and

looking at what Centers and the System Organization with its two constituent parts can do better and/or differently in 2019 to further enhance the achievement of goals. This session also provided an opportunity for discussion on other Center-identified topics. The Co-Conveners took an action to give appropriate feedback to the Executive Director and System Management Board Chair following the meeting, which at the time of sharing this summary has now been completed.

36. Agenda item 11 on Funder relationships was structured around both a review of engagement with Funders by Centers direct and System-wide, and a discussion on strategies with a focus on increasing the funding pool overall. Based on the presentation on 2019 Funding, the System Management Office was asked to provide Centers with a recommended spend against the 2019 Portfolio Financing Plan targets (anticipating that 100% of requested funding may not be received).
37. During Agenda item 12 the General Assembly addressed key business items pursuant to the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, having in mind the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.
38. **Nomenclature amendments to governing documents:** Arising from the adoption by the System Council on 4 October 2018 of new terms of reference for its advisory bodies and its Shared Secretariat, several nomenclature amendments to the CGIAR System Framework and Charter of the CGIAR System Organization were presented, including:
 - a. to introduce the CGIAR System's Independent Science for Development Council ('ISDC'), a successor to the now ended Independent Science and Partnership Council ('ISPC');
 - b. to give more visual prominence to the role of the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment ('SPIA'), now an independent advisory body that sits adjacent to, rather than being part of, the ISDC, but nevertheless working very closely with ISDC;
 - c. to introduce the CGIAR System Advisory Services Shared Secretariat ('Shared Secretariat') as the combined secretariat for the System's independent science, impact assessment and evaluations functions;
 - d. to recognize that external independent evaluations will be commissioned by the System Council via the new Shared Secretariat, and not via an additional independently operating office (formerly, the Independent Evaluation Arrangement); and
 - e. to bring in other conforming nomenclature changes.
39. Pursuant to articles 16 of the CGIAR System Framework ('Framework') and 15.2 of the Charter of the System Organization ('Charter'), amendments shall be adopted by (a) System Management Board, (b) two-thirds of Centers at the General Assembly of Centers and (c) System Council. It was noted that these nomenclature amendments had been approved by the System Council at SC7 (November 2018), and by the System Management Board at the SMB12 meeting (December 2018). Consequently, these proposed amendments were brought to the General Assembly.

40. The nomenclature amendments were approved through positive voting by all Centers at the General Assembly (**GA/M3/DP9**), with an agreement that a provision on a notice period for the General Assembly to receive and review proposed substantive/material amendments (and not simply nomenclature amendments) to the Framework and Charter be included in the General Assembly's Rules of Procedure.
41. **Policy adoption process for System-wide policies:** As background, the General Assembly were informed that:
- a. Prior to December 2016: there was a CGIAR Consortium Policy Adoption Process approved by the Consortium Board on 20 March 2014 (CB15), that required the former Fund Council and the former CGIAR Consortium to approve policies as part of a Common Operational Framework ('COF'). This approach expired at end of December 2016, with the end of the 'COF'.
 - b. As of July 2016: The System Management Board was established with key functions with respect to CGIAR policies (Charter, Article 8), such that it would:
 - q) recommend to the System Council for approval those CGIAR Policies that are strategic, system-wide policies that are critical to maintaining the reputation of the CGIAR System
 - r) adopt, and monitor compliance with, all necessary CGIAR Policies, procedures, guidelines and research standards for the CGIAR Portfolio, including those referred to in subparagraph (q) above, and take appropriate corrective action when required
42. Taking note that the CGIAR System 2019-2021 Business Plan flags several common policies that the System has agreed to develop, and recognizing that the absence of an agreed policy adoption process creates uncertainty, the General Assembly discussed the possibility of adopting a new policy adoption process.
43. It was noted that:
- a. Given that the Centers' Audit Committee Chairs are well placed to advise their respective Boards of Trustees on risks in respect of policy adoption, that forum provides an optimal mechanism to oversee development of a new policy adoption framework (with the next annual face-to-face meeting being held on 14-15 February 2019)
 - b. Thereafter, a proposed approach will be discussed by the System Management Board, after seeking inputs from other cross-System colleagues.
 - c. An agreed policy adoption approach will, once approved by the System Management Board, be codified in the Rules of Procedure of both the General Assembly and the System Management Board.
44. **Formal approval of Center representatives for 2019:** Following on from the presentation at the start of the day of the representation roles nominated by the

Board Chairs and Directors General, the following decisions were taken to confirm some of the roles, including:

- a. Election of the 2019 Board of Trustees Convener and Directors General Convener (**GA/M3/DP3**)
 - b. Appointing a Nominations Committee for 2019 SMB member appointments based on annual rotations (**GA/M3/DP8**)
45. **System Management Board Nominations Committee matters:** Receiving the report of the 2018 SMB Nominations Committee, some key lessons were identified:
- a. **Involvement of CGIAR key partner a strong positive**, even if it takes some extra time to get their involvement;
 - b. **The two-stage process worked well** in terms of separating out Center-affiliated selection and independent member selection processes. It meant that the Committee could take stock of what Center-affiliated members bring, and then find the most appropriate independent member.
 - c. **One voting round was also positive** as this enhanced timeliness and clarity for independent members.
46. The General Assembly revisited a couple of questions with respect to the System Management Board membership while taking stock of the 5 arising vacancies at 31 August 2019, including:
- a. **Balance of Independents, Board of Trustees members and Directors General:** With this topic first raised at the inaugural General Assembly and a decision taken at the 2nd General Assembly not to formalize a 3:3:3 model but allow flexibility on skills, it was agreed that it would be revisited at the 3rd General Assembly. After discussion, the General Assembly decided that 3:3:3 is a preferred model subject to skills needs requiring a different balance and that there should be at least two Board of Trustee members and two Directors General.
 - b. **Renewal of Membership terms:** During 2018, a proposal by the System Management Board Rules of Governance Working Group was adopted by the 2018 Nominations Committee to guide the renewal of membership terms such that all members can be renewed for up to 4 years, with Directors General only if they have a 2 year break. In discussing future use of such a model, the General Assembly agreed that a two-year break is preferred for Directors General but that this would not become a formal rule.
47. **Agenda Item 13** provided an opportunity for the General Assembly members to reflect on how the General Assembly can best operate between General Assembly annual meetings, particularly with respect to how to deliver on actions which emerge. There was interest expressed from the Board Chairs for meeting mid-year as they have fewer opportunities for engaging with each other, and that this could also provide an opportunity for Directors General to meet and for a day of cross-over discussions. Some possible options for dates were raised in looking at the calendar of key milestones and events for 2019, and it was proposed that if an in-person

meeting could not be organized then the possibility of a virtual one should be explored.

48. In considering the optimal timing and location for the fourth General Assembly of the Centers, the members welcomed the invitation from IRRI to host the meeting at its headquarters in Los Baños, the Philippines as part of its 60th anniversary celebrations. There was support for exploring slightly later dates than usual, with early to mid-February providing more time for organizing the meeting which would possibly be accompanied by the Partnership Forum being planned to take place in 2020.
 49. The Co-Chairs wrapped up the meeting with a show of appreciation for:
 - a. Board Chairs standing down before GA4 including **Margret Thalwitz and Geoff Hawtin**;
 - b. Directors General standing down before GA4 including **Ann Tutwiler, Ruben Echeverria and Shenggen Fan**;
 - c. Outgoing 2018 Co-Chair/Director General Convener: **Matthew Morell**;
 - d. The **System Management Office** for its support to the Co-Chairs in organizing the 3rd General Assembly and many of the inputs; and
 - e. The host of GA3- **CIFOR**- and all the staff who supported the event.
 50. The General Assembly members in turn expressed their appreciation for the role played by the 2018 Co-Chairs, Nicole Birrell and Matthew Morell, and anticipation for working closely with the re-elected/elected Conveners for 2019.
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Annex 1: Attendees of the 3rd General Assembly

*Center Board Chairs Convener, ** Center DGs Convener, #Delegated attendees

Participants

Center	Names	Position
AfricaRice	Eric Tollens	Board of Trustees Chair
	Harold Roy-Macauley	Director General
Bioversity	Julia Marton-Lefèvre	Board of Trustees Chair
	Ann Tutwiler	Director General
CIAT	Geoff Hawtin	Board of Trustees Chair
	Ruben Echeverria	Director General
CIFOR	José Campos	Board of Trustees Chair
	Robert Nasi	Director General
CIMMYT	Nicole Birrell*	Board of Trustees Chair
	Martin Kropff	Director General
CIP	Rodney Cooke	Board of Trustees Chair
	Barbara Wells	Director General
ICARDA	Margret Thalwitz	Board of Trustees Chair
	Aly Abousabaa	Director General
ICRAF	Marie Claire O'Connor	Board of Trustees Chair
	Tony Simons	Director General
ICRISAT	Paco Sereme	Board of Trustees Chair
	Peter Carberry	Director General
IFPRI	Mahendra Dev Suryadevara#	Board of Trustees Vice-Chair
	Shenggen Fan	Director General
IITA	Namanga Ngongi	Board of Trustees Chair
	Nteranya Sanginga	Director General
ILRI	Lindsay Falvey	Board of Trustees Chair
	Jimmy Smith	Director General
IRRI	Jim Godfrey	Board of Trustees Chair
	Matthew Morell**	Director General
IWMI	Roberto Lenton	Board of Trustees Chair
	Claudia Sadoff	Director General
WorldFish	Yvonne Pinto	Board of Trustees Chair
	Gareth Johnstone	Director General

Invited Guests

Marco Ferroni	Chair, CGIAR System Management Board	
Elwyn Grainger-Jones	Executive Director, CGIAR System Organization	
Bioversity-CIAT Alliance	Juan Lucas Restrepo	Incoming Director General, Bioversity International (March 2019)/ CEO of the Alliance (in 2020)

Additional content and operational support

Karmen Bennett	Director, Board and Council Relations, CGIAR System Organization
Andre Zandstra	Director, Funder and External Engagement, CGIAR System Organization
Nadia Manning-Thomas	Board and Council Relations Manager, CGIAR System Organization