

Meeting Summary
8th System Council Meeting
15 and 16 May 2019

Purpose:

This document presents the summary of the 8th meeting of the System Council held on 15 and 16 May 2019, as approved by the Council on a no objection basis with effect from 2 August 2019 (Decision Ref: SC/M8/EDP3).

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Prepared by: CGIAR System Management Office

Introduction:

This document presents a summary of the 8th meeting of the System Council (“Council”) held on 15 and 16 May 2019 at the ILRI Campus, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

By way of overview:

- **Agenda items.** The meeting considered the ten (10) agenda items set out in the table of contents on the following page.
- **Decisions****The Council took twelve (12) decisions during its meeting, described in the text.
- **Agreed positions and actions**** The Council agreed on two (2) positions and actions during its meeting, described in the text.
- **Participants.** [Annex 1](#) sets out a list of meeting participants.

*** The Decision Points and Agreed positions and actions noted in the text of this document were first shared in the SC8 Chair’s Summary, as issued on 23 May 2019, and available here: <https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SC8-Chairs-Summary.pdf>*

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Item 1: Opening Session

1. The System Council Chair, Juergen Voegele, opened the 8th meeting, thanking the Sub-Saharan African constituency for the proposal that the System Council convene on the African continent for the System Council's important May 2019 strategic deliberations. The Chair further extended appreciation to the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) for its hosting of the meeting and related events, noting that the Addis Ababa, Ethiopia campus operates as an example of a 'CGIAR hub', with 11 Centers having a presence together with other operational and Funder partners.
2. The System Council Chair recognized several new System Council voting members and alternates present, including representatives of the African Development Bank, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Canada, Japan, and the Latin America and Caribbean and West Asia and North Africa Constituencies. He also recognized the new non-voting ex-officio representatives of the Directors General of CGIAR Centers and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, as well as the Chair of the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment as an invited guest. A quorum was present.
3. Decision SC/M8/DP1: The System Council **appointed** Andrew Campbell, representative of Australia, as the non-voting Co-Chair for the meeting and gave its support to the Co-Chair's alternate Mellissa Wood fulfilling the functions as a System Council member during the meeting pursuant to Article 5.2 of the CGIAR System Framework.
4. The Chair tabled the provisional Agenda, noting that the first day of the meeting was anticipated to involve a considerable volume of presentations. He therefore confirmed he would be flexible on the timing for Council members to bring items into 'Other business' on the agenda later in proceedings, if the topic they wished to raise was not resolved during the course of the meeting.
5. Decision SC/M8/DP2: The System Council **adopted** the Agenda issued on 23 April 2019 (Meeting document [SC8-01: Adopted Agenda](#))
6. There were no declarations of interests made on the Agenda.

Item 2: Implementing CGIAR Business Plan 2019-2021 with a view to 2030

7. The Co-Chair framed the session, recalling discussions at the System Council's 6th meeting in Berlin, that an inaugural CGIAR multi-year business plan could serve as a transformational moment for CGIAR. At the System Council's 7th meeting this was further cemented by the approval of the CGIAR System 3-year Business Plan (2019-2021) based on broad cross-System consultations, as introduced by a compelling 'Foreword' from the CGIAR Center Board of Trustees Chairs. At the time of approval, the System Council requested that annual updates on the ten actions be provided so that the Council could take stock of overall progress towards implementation of the Business Plan across the System and discuss any areas where additional implementation support might be required.
8. The Chair of the System Management Board, Marco Ferroni, provided observations on implementation of the Business Plan since January 2019, reflecting on his role as one of the Co-Chairs of the System Reference Group, being a key consultation forum for preparation of the longer-run 'CGIAR 2030 Plan' (Action 10).
9. The Executive Director of the System Organization, Elwyn Grainger-Jones, shared that implementation is broadly on-track, noting that a more substantial update on progress would be available at the November 2019 Council meeting. He outlined the status and progress of the ten actions, eight of which were identified as generally on-track, and two having adjusted timelines. It was also noted that a number of these items would be covered in greater depth in agenda items over the next two days.¹
10. Council members shared the following observations on the early progress update:
 - a. Appreciation for the dashboard-style overview format of implementation reporting.
 - b. An introductory observation (to be expanded on during the relevant SC8 Agenda item) was that a substantial increase in the rate of progress on strengthening gender equality in CGIAR's workplaces is needed (Action 4).
 - c. Action 6 on enhancing collaboration with delivery partners was welcomed, with the suggestion that FAO and development banks are important delivery partners to engage with. It was suggested that the private sector is also an important partner for scaling and delivery.
 - d. There was a suggestion that country collaboration merited greater attention and that this should be an important part of the work being undertaken in Action 6. In addition to engaging with individual countries, sub-regional and regional organizations may also have an important role to play in linkages with CGIAR.
 - e. The important underpinning of all the actions by the strategic work being undertaken by the System Reference Group, co-chaired by the System Management Board Chair and the System Council's representative from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

¹ The 'traffic light update' and all other formal meeting papers are accessible at: <https://www.cgiar.org/meeting-document/8th-cgiar-system-council-meeting/>

11. In wrapping up the session, the Co-Chair echoed appreciation for a succinct explanation of where CGIAR stands on key strategic actions, and the expectation that over time, additional available information would continue to improve transparency.

Item 3: Roadmap for the CGIAR 2030 Plan: Opportunities for strategic input

12. The Chair framed the discussion by recalling that at the 6th Council meeting in May 2018, agreement had been reached that there was a need for the System to be bolder for CGIAR to deliver what it is that the world most needs from it. At that earlier meeting, the System Reference Group was established to provide a mechanism for bold – and potentially uncomfortable – conversations, to explore what it would take on the part of both CGIAR’s Centers and CGIAR Funders to move forward to the next level. The Council was reminded that the System Reference Group is not a decision-making body, and that discussions during this session would be the first opportunity to listen to early thinking and ideas emerging from the System Reference Group’s early engagement to date, and to provide inputs and feedback.
13. As a scene-setter, the Council watched a video summary of the January 2019 EAT-Lancet report² as delivered by Johan Rockström to the Executive Board at the recent World Bank Spring meetings, in which he not only gave detailed information on recent science but conveyed uncomfortable truths and a sense of urgency about planetary boundaries.
14. The System Council Chair echoed a key message of the talk - that the two global priorities to address should be fuel and food, with the rest being ‘footnotes’ in what is a critical dialogue. The System Council Chair also highlighted that CGIAR’s strengths mean that it can be positioned as a key part of the solution to the transition of the food system to address the second of those two priority areas.
15. The Co-Chairs of the System Reference Group were invited to lead discussions of the Council on the profound messages conveyed in the video summary. Tony Cavalieri, System Reference Group Co-Chair, opened with an appreciation for the opportunity to help steward such bold conversations, and for the license from the System Council to enable a searching look at important directions for a future-facing CGIAR. He clarified that the aim of the System Reference Group is to: (i) identify some bold visions for CGIAR, including what could be the most compelling research agenda to address those global challenges where CGIAR has a compelling comparative advantage; (ii) look at how this is done with partners to deliver the results; and (iii) consider how, organizationally, CGIAR’s Centers and engagement with the System Management Board can be structured in a way that allows CGIAR as a System to fully rise to the challenge. It was confirmed that the System Reference Group’s deliberations will help to inform decisions on the 2030 Plan at the November 2019 System Council meeting, with this Council meeting presenting an opportunity to deliver a ‘midterm report’ on early System Reference Group discussions and collating the Council’s inputs to inform a 3-day System Reference Group retreat in July 2019.

² [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)31788-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)31788-4/fulltext)

16. By way of broader context to the role of the System Reference Group, the Executive Director provided some background on the broader process around development of the longer-run 'CGIAR 2030 Plan'. It was recalled that as Action 10 of the Business Plan, the primary purpose of the System agreeing a 'CGIAR 2030 Plan' was to fill the gap of CGIAR as a System not operating accordingly in a more aligned manner in a rapidly-changing world. Pointing to this meeting being the start rather than end of a much broader consultation, it was explained that the roadmap to approval of the 'CGIAR 2030 Plan', as outlined in [meeting document SC8-03](#), includes the key role of the System Reference Group supporting the development of the 2030 Plan through a consultative, creative process to bring people and elements together. It is proposed that all stakeholders be engaged throughout the process through a series of consultations and events which would together make up a 'partnership forum' as a consultative mechanism, rather than one single stand-alone event.
17. While the decision on the roadmap would be revisited during the decision session (agenda item 9), feedback was given by Council members at this time, including that:
 - a. The process should be designed to be as focused and light-touch as possible, thereby ensuring it was effective and efficient rather than heavy and complex;
 - b. It is very important to learn from the past, including from two generations of CGIAR research programs ('CRPs') and from previous work of the advisory services, as well as from upcoming opportunities, such as lessons learned around implementation of CGIAR's performance management standards;
 - c. For the System Council to be part of the design process on an attractive portfolio, the timing and sequencing of the process to approve the next research portfolio and the funding modalities will be critical; and
 - d. The System Reference Group would carry out its mandate until the System Council meeting in November 2019.
18. The unique window of opportunity that the 2030 Plan's development represents was acknowledged, both in terms of the urgency of the global challenges that CGIAR seeks to address in the context of contributing to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and Funder appetite at this time to see a shift in the way that CGIAR operates and delivers.
19. The Council received presentations on behalf of each of three sub-themes being explored by the System Reference Group, followed by dedicated time for discussion and strategic inputs. Each presentation focused on a range of early ideas and approaches, noting that none of these is recommended or endorsed at this stage. Rather, that the mandate had been to explore bold ideas without, for now, taking items off the table.³
20. Accordingly, as a recap of the thematic areas of the conversations, and taking note of the membership of each of the Theme-groups at the time of this meeting as set out in Annex 2 to this Summary, the following notes the broad areas of focus of each

³ For this reason, the details of each presentation are not set out specifically in this meeting summary but will be further developed based on inputs provided during the System Reference Group's subsequent interactions.

group, recognizing that more substantive conversations – with additional evidence and data behind them – will take place at the System Reference Group’s retreat over 16-18 July 2019:

- a. Theme 1: *Framing CGIAR’s forward-looking research focus, with better connections to the wider agricultural research for development system for impact.* It was noted that this group has been exploring options for what CGIAR would do and why, in the context of important problems and challenges it is trying to solve.
 - b. Theme 2: *Considering how CGIAR can optimally deliver the results of the research it is undertaking.* With robust discussions on partners, particularly with the National Agricultural Research Systems, the Private Sector and NGOs, it was noted that the group is looking at what mechanisms can best support successful partnerships that have positive implications for farmers, for the agricultural system and the food system.
 - c. Theme 3: *Considering institutional structures and arrangements,* with an aim to explore whether there is a structure as between CGIAR Centers that makes working together easier, can reduce transaction costs, and can drive the System to do things better.
21. The Council heard country and regional perspectives on the development of the 2030 Plan arising from discussions among a panel of representatives from the System Council developing country constituencies, as moderated by Nadia Manning-Thomas, Board and Council Relations Manager of the System Organization. The panel included:
- a. Weiping Hao, China (East Asia and the Pacific)
 - b. Pedro Machado, Brazil (Latin America and the Caribbean)
 - c. Yarama Ndirpaya, Nigeria (Sub-Saharan Africa)
 - d. Rasoul Zare, Iran (West Asia and North Africa)
 - e. India (South Asia) provided written comments which were read out in the meeting.
22. Key messages during the interactive session with System Council member questions and answers included:
- a. That it is important for CGIAR to operate as a single System working together in each country, engaging in strong partnerships and making impacts collectively;
 - b. From a country perspective, it is vital that CGIAR reduce bureaucratic administration, so as to increase its participation in national processes and enable strong partnerships with national actors;
 - c. There are opportunities for closer cooperation on both scientific endeavors as well as for delivery and impact that should be more proactively explored;
 - d. CGIAR can play a major role in brokering linkages between countries and fostering international collaboration particularly on some key issues;

- e. Countries need science and technology to help support their agricultural production and development trajectories;
 - f. There is a particular need for focused research to provide an evidence-base to support countries' efforts to work towards a climate resilient agriculture for sustainability;
 - g. National programs are very valued partners for research and capacity building. While some NARS are still in need of funding themselves to strengthen their work, which could be done through partnership with CGIAR Centers, other NARS in addition to participation could contribute to some joint investment in these partnership activities; and
 - h. Engaging in dialogue with sub-regional organizations and advisory groups, with an example of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), could be a useful way to link both with countries in the regions but also for influencing policy at a wider scale.
23. The System Council Chair thanked the regional representatives, noting the importance of inclusion of these perspectives in the System Reference Group process and on the System Council's agenda for future sessions.

Contextual presentations and events

24. A series of 'Lightning Talks' were presented to the Council, demonstrating innovation from the field and providing examples of CGIAR's researchers striving to deliver cutting edge quality research that meets our stakeholders' needs. The young CGIAR scientists providing these compelling insights into CGIAR's forward-looking research agenda were:
- a. Lightning Talk 1: Sylvia Alonso (*CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH)*)
 - b. Lightning Talk 2: Evan Girvetz (*CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)*)
 - c. Lightning Talk 3: Likimyelesh Nigussie (*CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE)*)
 - d. Lightning Talk 4: Carolina Sansaloni (*CGIAR Research Program on WHEAT*)
 - e. Lightning Talk 5: Phyllis Ndung'u (*CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)*)
 - f. Lightning Talk 6: Rose Komugisha Basiita (*CGIAR Research Program on FISH*)
25. The System Council Chair commended the young scientists for their presentations, showcasing a scientific approach characterized by rigor, technological savviness, and a real eye on the client. He expressed that these talks highlight the real difference research is able to make on the ground and exemplify the critical need for the discussions that are being held through the System Reference Group process.
26. The first meeting day was closed with a major collaborative event titled '*Ethiopia and CGIAR: partnering together to transform food systems*'. The event showcased examples of CGIAR working together with a joint vision, common themes and presence on the ground, in partnership with national programs and national partners.

These messages were complemented by a presentation at the opening of the second meeting day by Jimmy Smith, Director General of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), on the evolution of work at ILRI Campus in Ethiopia and its comparative advantage.

Item 4: Reflections for ISDC Interim Chair and SPIA Chair

27. The System Council Chair invited Maggie Gill, to share reflections on the landscape ahead, recognizing her many years of service in chairing first the Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC), and now as Interim Chair of the Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)⁴.
28. The ISDC Interim Chair's [presentation](#) offered perspectives on the following three areas, noting that a synthesis brief of the work of the former ISPC was being developed to inform the work of the System Reference Group:
 - a. Evidence as well as results from foresight activities;
 - b. Lessons learned particularly from the two phases of the CRPs; and
 - c. New ideas on what is the added value of the CGIAR collective.
29. With appreciation for the thought-provoking presentation, the Council was invited to raise comments, questions and reflections on the advice provided, with the following being some highlights from discussions:
 - a. It is important that CGIAR not only think in terms of content but also the target groups and clients so that problems addressed through research are linked to who will benefit from research and how.
 - b. A clear message that there needs to be balance between 'blue sky' research and research applicable to identified needs, which may vary by Center, but as a collective there needs to a big picture perspective driving the research agenda which can be stimulated by foresight work.
 - c. There is a need to establish focus and that this focus needs to be clearly followed through in the shared research agenda.
30. Recognizing this to be her last Council meeting following many years of providing high-level independent expert advice and counsel to the CGIAR System, the System Council Chair, for and on behalf of the Council, expressed CGIAR's sincere appreciation to Maggie Gill for her rigor, dedication and passion in providing quality advice to the System Council and the broader CGIAR System. Council participants recorded their strong support for these sentiments through a round of applause.
31. Karen Macours, Chair of the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA)⁵, was then invited to provide a high-level recap of the role of SPIA, with a focus on expanding the evidence of impact and supporting CGIAR's commitment to a culture of impact assessment.

⁴ Terms of Reference of the ISDC available at: <https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/TOR-ISDC-Approved-04Oct2018.pdf>

⁵ Terms of Reference of SPIA available at: <https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/TOR-SPIA-Approved-4Oct2018.pdf>

32. By way of framing, the SPIA Chair outlined for the Council some of the challenges in thinking about impact for CGIAR with a set of agricultural research for development centers and programs each having long and complex causal pathways, with several uncertainties to be considered. Her [presentation](#) pointed to the need to think differently about impact assessment of CGIAR compared to impact assessment of a particular intervention, and SPIA's role is to work with the System in this unique circumstance.
33. The Chair thanked the SPIA Chair for the comprehensive presentation, reflecting on the difficult task of sensibly measuring the impact, which is often a long-term and complex process. On invitation for reflections from the Council the following key points emerged:
- a. There is an interest in better understanding how new methods and methodology are being used in impact assessment, particularly digital technology and other technologies, and how these may make impact assessment more affordable, better, more effective, and more relevant. While it may not be possible to substitute new technologies for existing methods, they do offer opportunities with which SPIA is engaging to better understand how they can help provide a more comprehensive picture.
 - b. There are many methods used in impact assessment studies that can provide information on the monetary value of the benefits from investment. Rather than looking at the monetary benefit and cost of one particular research investment, there could be greater value in thinking at the portfolio level to provide a more comprehensive picture. It is also critical to choose good methods, as some of the outcomes of CGIAR's work and the benefits are very hard to put a monetary value on.
 - c. In addition to a focus on the methods and structures around impact assessment, the System Council would also benefit from being exposed to some particular cases both in terms of showcasing big wins but also from learning studies which provide a more forward-looking perspective.
 - d. The importance of a clear theory of change to be able to determine what is intended to change and how, recognizing that there is a lot of heterogeneity in the way that theories of change are developed and monitored, and the greater awareness on impact it creates.
34. In extending appreciation for the presentation, the System Council Chair also suggested that the Council would benefit from a discussion led by SPIA at the November 2019 Council meeting on a synthesis of the main areas where there is a degree of confidence and good data on having real impact. Not intended to focus on a single example or requiring new studies, such a presentation should provide a comprehensive high-level summary of what impact is being achieved particularly on climate and on nutritional outcomes.

35. [Action Point SC/M8/AP2: Science advice for the System Council](#)

System Council members are **requested** to provide by end-June 2019, high-level strategic inputs to inform the development on impact assessment case studies (including priority subject areas for that presentation) for delivery by the SPIA Chair during the Council's 9th meeting in November 2019.

Item 5: Strengthening gender equality in CGIAR's workplaces

36. The Co-Chair framed the session by recalling Action 4 of the CGIAR System's 3-year Business Plan (2019-2021), which focuses on people management across the System. It was noted that Action 4 frames a plan to design and implement a gender equality, diversity and inclusion framework that will set out the commitment to gender equality and diversity through strategic objectives, high-level targets and an overall accountability framework.
37. The Co-Chair also reflected on the fact that the task is not an easy one, but noted major transformations in representation of women in his own organization and the change in the quality of discussions and decision-making that resulted. He urged the Council and those involved in implementing Action 4 to look at emerging management literature which points to very real examples of the positive impact of improved representation of women.
38. The Co-Chair invited inputs from three representatives of CGIAR's Centers on some of the good practices being adopted and how they are bringing about positive impacts in gender equality, including:
- a. Nicole Birrell, 2019 Convener of the Chairs of Trustees of CGIAR Centers (Chair of the Board of Trustees of CIMMYT)
 - b. Aly Abousabaa, 2019 Convener of the Directors General of CGIAR Centers (Director General of ICARDA)
 - c. Claudia Sadoff, Gender Champion Member of the System Management Board (Director General of IWMI)
39. Key themes that emerged from the contributions by the Center representatives were:
- a. Policies can be powerful mechanisms to stimulate creative thinking and critical action in the area of gender equality.
 - b. Gender and diversity are consistently addressed in SMB, General Assembly and Center Board meetings, recognizing the importance of setting the tone from the top.
 - c. Several efforts are underway, including through improved gender sensitive recruitment and employment processes and practices. Examples provided included ensuring balanced shortlists and recruitment panels, review of role descriptions to avoid gendered language, pay grade audits and promotion equity reviews, security training, crèche facilities, travel policies for staff with nursing infants, different opportunities for working arrangements to help promote and achieve better work/life balance, and providing access to women's leadership and coaching programs.
 - d. While there is commitment to strengthening gender equality and in particular

representation of women in the Centers, there are some geographic locations which present challenges to these efforts, for which measures such as special security training for women are designed to help address.

- e. Unconscious bias is something that needs to be and is being addressed across the System, noting that this can occur in behavior and in written communications. The need to call this out in a constructive, non-judgmental way was emphasized.
- f. Appreciation was expressed for the continued pressure to ‘do better’ and for support received to tackle the more complex challenges.

40. In the discussions that followed, the Council recognized that:

- a. On progress: The effort being put in and concrete actions being taken is clear and appreciated.
- b. On practices: An additional good practice to the many activities that have been reported on across the Centers could be mandatory gender-based analysis plus training for all staff. With an example of this being done every two years within the government of Canada, it was emphasized that these perspectives need continual reinforcement to build it into the work culture.
- c. On approach: It was encouraged to take more of a feminist perspective, with best practices identified not only being applied to female staff but also to male staff to support spouses and whole family structures.
- d. On data: A request was made to see the absolute number of staff in addition to percentages presented in the report to the System Council, particularly as the size of Centers differs, and also to include the proportion of women in support staff levels. The inclusion of trend information over time was also proposed for future reports to the Council.
- e. On targets: It was noted that against the April 2019 System Management Board adopted target of a minimum of 35% representation of women at all professional roles by 2020⁶, three Centers have reached the target, seven are close to it and others have further to go. Centers were encouraged to continue to strengthen their efforts, and it was suggested that there should be incentives or consequences to reaching or not reaching the agreed targets. It was also proposed that specific attention be paid to how to have at least 35% women in higher management positions as this can also contribute to further progress.

41. SC/M8/AP1: Progress on strengthening gender equality in CGIAR’s workplaces

Agreed Position: The System Council took note of the progress made and efforts underway to meet the agreed target on gender equality in CGIAR’s workplaces.

Related Action(s):

- i. The System Council requested that a report on progress towards the target be provided to each System Council meeting until end-2020.
- ii. The System Council requested that the System Management Board provide information on any incentive framework or other mechanisms to be put in place to support progress towards and achievement of the target.

⁶ <https://www.cgiar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SMB13-ChairsSummary.pdf>

Item 6: CGIAR's Independent Advisory Services

42. Continuing the topic of advisory services, the Chair invited Michel Bernhardt, Chair of the System Council's Strategic Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (SIMEC) to lead the Council through a presentation and discussion.
43. The SIMEC Chair outlined four topics including:
 - a. An update on the 2019 appointment process for filling the Chair and five member vacancies for CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC). An advertisement for applications and nominations for these positions has been published, and a Nominations Panel with approved TOR by the System Council will be formed to take this process forward with the intention to have new members in place, after System Council approval, by September 2019.
 - b. A proposal on extending the term of the Interim Chair of the ISDC until mid-September, with key deliverables including moderation of the external independent assessment of the Gender Platform proposal(s).
 - c. An update on the transition plan for the establishment of the CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat which came into existence on 1 April 2019 and is situated at Bioversity International's premises in Rome, under a hosting agreement with the System Organization. While staffing was being built up (3 of 9 staff roles filled, and a re-launch of the Director search planned), guidance to the three workstreams in the Shared Secretariat will be provided by the Chairs of ISDC, SPIA and SIMEC. Additionally, since the System Council meeting in November 2018, the evaluation workplan and budget have been further developed, making use of the perspectives provided by the System Council. The intention is to have a sharper focus on two key areas: (i) the progress that CRPs are making with regard to delivery of results; and (ii) the assessment against the agreed performance management standards to help understand how well CRPs are managing their research portfolios and processes.
 - d. Introducing the 'Connecting the Dots' process (stewarded by SIMEC) to support increased operational alignment amongst the advisory services and other stakeholders within the context of the CGIAR Business Plan and key deliberation and decision-making moments within those cycles. A meeting held in Montpellier in April 2019 brought together representatives from the advisory services, Center science leaders, CRPs, and System Management Office with SIMEC, to undertake an exercise to bring together ideas, information and insights into an operational framework which will be brought to the System Council in November 2019.
44. Opening up the floor to the Council for comments and questions, the following reflections were provided:
 - a. There are lessons to be learned from the process undertaken to strengthen the way the advisory services are mandated and integrated into the System that

- should help inform System Council decision-making and action in the future.
- b. For the current Business Plan cycle, the emphasis of evaluation activities should not be to focus on developing a work program that targets the delivery of extensive individual CRP evaluations. Rather, with a key element of the 2019-2021 Business Plan being the development of a longer-run 'CGIAR 2030 Plan', the System Council would value the delivery of independent analysis on the performance standards (as planned) and other targeted reviews that can provide objective information on what's working and what is not.
 - c. The outcome of the 'connecting the dots' exercise was that the interfaces between the different works streams of the advisory services need to be identified and strengthened so that they can be fed into different governance and management bodies of the System.
 - d. While independent science advice is extremely valuable, this advice should not be delivered in a way that is independent of the governance of the System. While putting in place the new arrangements for the advisory services that follow the System Council approved terms of reference has encountered unforeseen challenges, there is recognizable progress both in strengthening the interaction between the advisory services and the System's governing bodies, and in optimizing how this robust, independent advice and expertise can be used by the System.
45. The Chair extended appreciation to a number of groups involved in the advancement of the CGIAR independent advisory services including:
- a. Recognizing the continued service and professionalism of the persons working in the advisory services despite uncertainty during the transition; and
 - b. Appreciating the efforts of SIMEC in stewarding these processes.

Item 7: Introducing operational elements to advance past SC decisions and discussions

46. The Co-Chair framed the session, noting that the materials presented for decision represent development of topics discussed and decisions taken by the Council during previous sessions. Jamie Craig, Director of Financial and Digital Services, CGIAR System Organization, was invited to present the key points and decisions requested at this time.

Funding the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA)

47. It was noted that the budget and workplan for SPIA were approved at the Council's 7th meeting in November 2018, and that the request that a value for money assessment of the budget by the Council's Assurance Oversight Committee under the guidance of SIMEC had been completed. [Meeting document SC8-07](#) therefore sets out a proposed mechanism to ensure that a portion of the SPIA budget can be funded by potential Funders via Window 1 or 2, through a new module in the CGIAR Platform for Big Data in Agriculture. It was confirmed that the arrangement would not involve oversight of SPIA activities by the Platform but would administratively enable the flow of funding.

48. [SC/M8/DP4: Impact assessment module in Big Data in Agriculture Platform](#)
The System Council approved the creation of an additional module in the 'Big Data in Agriculture Platform', to provide a financing mechanism for impact assessment work to be undertaken as part of the SPIA work program.

Crops to End Hunger Module

49. It was recalled that a need exists to ensure a fit-for-purpose funding mechanism to enable Funder interest in supporting the Crops to End Hunger activities and initiatives to be mobilized. [Meeting document SC8-08](#) sets out the proposal to create a new module within the Excellence in Breeding (EIB) platform to channel specific financing for additional uplift costs arising.
50. It was noted that feedback received on the document prior to the meeting had resulted in adjustments to: (i) clarify that modernization is about enabling delivery of the higher rate of genetic gains in the fields of smallholder famers and not generically about modernization; (ii) emphasize that Funders' regional or global priorities have been taken into account, noting that prioritization plans will be presented on an annual basis to Crops to End Hunger Funders for their approval; (ii) clarify that all disbursements are to be made according to the crop breeding improvement plans and Funder priorities for crop by geography combinations; and (iv) that membership of the Platform Steering Committee would continue to include Deputy Directors General Research from breeding Centers, along with two to four representatives with major experience in large scale public or private sector breeding, and up to four technical representatives of Funders to attend as active observers.
51. [SC/M8/DP5: Crops to end hunger module in 'Excellence in breeding Platform'](#)
The System Council approved the creation of an additional module in the 'Excellence in Breeding Platform' to facilitate targeted funding of the Crops to end Hunger Initiative.

W1 Special Alliance Fund: Center Alliances

52. It was noted that the proposal set out in [meeting document SC8-09](#) speaks specifically to Action 5.1 from CGIAR Business Plan 2019-2021 to attract additional funding and support for Center alliances. The proposal requests, first, to create a Window 1 specialized fund, and second, to seed that fund with \$1million from the W1 Liquidity and Stabilization Fund as an initial contribution. It was highlighted that while there are expected positive returns on investment in both financial and non-financial terms from alliance activities or shared services created, this initiative would provide an incentive for Centers to begin exploration of opportunities with funding support and provide a means for Funders who are interested in supporting these activities to do so through Window 1. It was also noted that this would ensure a degree of rigor and consistency with respect to prioritizing such investments and to reporting on them in order to maximize learning and information sharing across the System.

53. The Council saw video messages from two sets of Centers currently undertaking alliance activities. The first was presented by Ruben Echeverria, Director General of CIAT and Juan Lucas Restrepo, Director General of Bioversity International and CEO-elect of the Bioversity International – CIAT Alliance, setting out recent progress on the development of the Alliance and reaffirming its aspirations. The second video featured Harold Roy-Macauley, Director General of AfricaRice and Matthew Morell, Director General of IRRI, setting out the high-level vision for a single coherent and highly impactful rice based agri-food research for development program for Africa.
54. In discussions that followed, several Funders reconfirmed their support for institutional alliance and merger activities and recognized the importance of available funding to initiate these. It was reiterated that criteria to access the funding support should be for alliances as mechanisms to deliver synergy and not solely rationalization of current effort. The need for sharing of knowledge and experiences from activities already undertaken was echoed.
55. [SC/M8/DP6: Window 1 Special Alliance Fund](#)
The System Council approved the creation of the Window 1 Special Alliance Fund together with an allocation of US\$ 1 million from the Window 1 Liquidity and Stabilization Fund as the first contribution into the Window 1 Special Alliance Fund.

Implementing the 2019-2021 CGIAR Research Financing Plan

56. It was recalled that the 2019-2021 CGIAR Research Financing Plan ('FinPlan') was approved by the Council on an electronic basis on 10 January 2019, and included a shift from a fully-linked Window 1 and 2 system to partially-linked Windows 1 and 2. The specific modality set out in [meeting document SC8-10](#) is therefore intended as supplemental guidance as a further enhancement of the FinPlan to avoid unintended disincentives that might inhibit additional contributions to Window 1 and 2. The proposal aims to ensure full transparency early in the 3-year business cycle to support stability and predictability of funding.
57. [SC/M8/DP7: Guidance on implementation of 2019-2021 CGIAR Financing Plan](#)
The System Council approved the implementation guidance as a further enhancement of the 2019-2021 CGIAR Financing Plan.

Item 8: SC engagement flexibilities for new funder opportunities

58. The Chair framed the session by asking the Council to consider what could be put in place to encourage new Funders to the System or incentivize existing Funders to increase their contributions, noting that the proposal set out in [meeting document SC8-11](#) sets out a possible avenue to do so via the introduction of five temporary voting seats on the System Council accessible via a weighted contribution of \$10 million over three years to Windows 1 and 2 only.

59. In discussions on the proposal, a number of perspectives were shared, including:
- a. The benefit of bringing potential Funders to the System earlier than they would otherwise do so based on the existing reconciliation schedule was acknowledged;
 - b. It was suggested that increased diversity of Funders on the System Council could be positive;
 - c. It was confirmed that the genesis of the proposal had been from discussions with interested potential Funders;
 - d. Reservations were expressed given the detailed negotiations undertaken prior to the 2016 governance reform to establish the Council in its current configuration;
 - e. A suggestion was made that temporary non-voting seats would be an alternative approach, however there was acknowledgement from several Funders that the voting role, even if not used in typical practice, represented an honor and therefore an important part of the incentive to attract additional funding; and
 - f. Support was expressed for temporary seats as a pragmatic approach that avoided adjusting a governance structure that had been carefully considered and agreed.
60. In summarizing, the Chair emphasized the need for a strong incentive for potential new Funders, and the temporary nature of the seats was such that if the Council felt at a future time that the arrangement was not optimal in terms of the System's needs, there would be an opportunity to reassess.
61. [SC/M8/DP8: System Council engagement flexibilities for new funder opportunities](#)
The System Council approved, as amendments to Article 3 and Annex B of the CGIAR System Framework, up to five temporary additional Funder voting seats on the System Council subject to meeting agreed criteria.

Item 9: System Council decision session

62. The Secretary to the System Council, Karmen Bennett, presented a summary of decisions agreed during the meeting including proposed administrative decisions arising from previous decisions taken by the Council. Those decisions not already recorded under the relevant agenda item above are noted below:
63. [SC/M8/DP3: Roadmap for the 2030 Plan](#)
The System Council **endorsed** the 'Roadmap for the 2030 Plan' as the agreed overarching framework for the development of the 'CGIAR 2030 Plan', noting the continuing stewardship role of the System Reference Group until the 9th System Council meeting in November 2019.

64. [SC/M8/DP9](#): The System Council:
- i. **Extended** the term of Maggie Gill as the Interim Chair of the Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) with effect until 20 September 2019; and
 - ii. **Took note** that should a new ISDC Chair not have been appointed by that date, another current serving ISDC member will be appointed by the System Council, through electronic decision, as Interim Chair for an interim term up to and including the System Council's 9th meeting to allow for continuity in this role.
65. [SC/M8/DP10](#): Pursuant to the terms of reference of the Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC), the System Council **approved** the membership of the 2019 ISDC Nominations Panel as follows:

Member category	Appointed person(s)
<u>System Council members</u> nominated by the System Council Chair, one of whom shall be the Chair of the System Council's Strategic Impact, Monitoring Evaluation Committee ('SIMEC') or her/his delegate	Michel Bernhardt (Chair) Pedro Machado
<u>Science leaders</u> nominated by the System Council Chair	Ylva Hillbur Derek Byerlee
Persons fully external to CGIAR	Lindiwe Sibanda

66. [SC/M8/DP11](#): The System Council **approved** a 2019 budget ceiling of \$605,000 for the Shared Secretariat Evaluation Workstream for implementation of the agreed strategic priorities, with oversight by the System Council's Strategic Impact, Monitoring Evaluation Committee ('SIMEC') until the Director, Shared Secretariat is in place.
67. [SC/M8/DP12](#): The System Council **extended** the membership term of Daniel van Gilst, System Council voting member, Norway, for the System Council's Assurance Oversight Committee ('AOC') until 30 June 2021.

Item 10: Other Business

68. An update on the situation and response to **Fall Armyworm** was provided to the System Council including:
- a. A presentation from Hans Dreyer, FAO: Focusing on the dramatic changes over the last three years reflected in the spread of the pest throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, South and South-East Asia, with presence recorded from the start of 2019 in China. As the pest attacks food crops and is now an intercontinental issue, there is increased urgency to address Fall Armyworm. Reflecting on the initial joint activities between FAO and CGIAR to identify the

best strategic approach, the presentation outlined the variety of convenings and activities that have been taking place ranging from raising awareness, capacity development, research and emergency response. A recently endorsed framework for partnership seeks to facilitate exchange among development partners with common objectives across twelve technical working groups addressing all issues related to management of Fall Armyworm. A Charter for the research for development consortium is now being developed to support a unified reference for the response.

- b. A video from Martin Kropff, CIMMYT: The Director General of CIMMYT re-emphasized that the challenge has increased with the spread of the pest outside of Africa, bringing immense destruction particularly to maize crops. With no single solution available to address this issue, it is important that an integrated pest management package be developed that can work in different environments. CGIAR is proud to be part of the research for development international consortium bringing together knowledge and ideas for fighting the pest into an emerging response. This consortium had a successful meeting in Addis Ababa last year with more than forty institutions participating and resulting in strategic R4D priorities which are guiding the work moving forward. CGIAR is actively supporting the additional effort required to achieve better coordination at national, regional and international level to ensure the intended impact on smallholders' livelihoods.
 - c. Comments by Rob Bertram, System Council member for USA: It was commented that this is a classic example of how CGIAR is positioned to meet an emergent threat, with its research and presence on the ground making it a valuable partner in the R4D consortium. It was also presented that USAID is working on a global 'pesticide evaluation report and safer use action plan ('PERSUAP') which may be of interest to other Funders and partners.
69. Michel Bernhardt also shared some efforts by Germany to become part of the shared funding agenda through avenues in Window 2. It was raised that there were some contractual issues being experienced to achieve this, which would need to be addressed through adjustments to the funding agreements for the CGIAR Trust Fund. It was acknowledged that the System Council would need to approve such changes, and thus a possible future agenda item was flagged.
70. For future locations and dates of System Council meetings, it was noted that there have been several offers, and a proposal on dates and locations for the meetings in 2020 would be put together and shared for System Council consideration in due course.
71. The representative from Japan shared information on an important meeting held in April involving Chief Scientists and Agriculture Ministers in which CGIAR also participated in fruitful discussions on priority agricultural research. It was also announced that Japan will host the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) 7 this August with many CGIAR institutes expected to attend.

72. In reflecting on the meeting, the Chair acknowledged the Council's openness and commitment to having substantial, bold conversations around the future of CGIAR and the increased momentum with which those conversations are moving forwards.
73. The Chair thanked the Council for the collegial and constructive atmosphere in which the meeting was conducted. He expressed appreciation also to the number of invited guests who provided well prepared information and ideas to the meeting.
74. Recognizing that organizing the System Council meeting and the many side meetings and events is a major effort, the Chair also acknowledged the preparation and arrangements carried out.
75. The meeting was closed.

Annex 1: List of meeting participants

Meeting Leadership
Chair: Juergen Voegele
Co-Chair: Andrew Campbell (Australia)

Version: 20 May 2019

*Note: The symbols '**' and '***' shown against a name below indicates that voting member/active observer is being represented at the meeting by the alternate ('**') or another delegated representative ('***').*

System Council Voting Members (listed alphabetically)	Member representative	Member Alternates & Other Delegation Members
AfDB	Bouchaib Boulanouar**	
Australia	Melissa Wood*	
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Tony Cavalieri	Alternate Member - Enock Chikava
Canada	Nikita Eriksen-Hamel**	Designated Alternate - Renaud De Plaen Other delegate - Jemimah Njuki (Day 2)
East Asia & Pacific (voting member China)	Weiping Hao**	Alternate Member - Syaiful Anwar (Indonesia) Other delegate - Dandan Huang (China)
Germany & Belgium	Michel Bernhardt**	
Japan	Motoaki Komiya	Other delegates - Satoru Muranaka, Naoko Oka
Latin America and Caribbean (voting member Brazil)	Pedro Machado (Brazil)	Alternate Member - Jorge Mario Diaz Luengas (Colombia)
The Netherlands	Melle Leenstra	
Norway	Daniel van Gilst	
Sub-Saharan Africa (voting member Nigeria)	Yarama D. Ndirpaya (Nigeria)	Alternate Member - Adil Abdelrahim (Sudan)
Sweden	Eva Ohlsson	Alternate Member - Philip Chiverton
Switzerland	Michel Evéquoz	
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Alan Tollervey	
United States of America	Rob Bertram	Alternate Member - Eric Witte
West Asia & North Africa (voting member Iran)	Rasoul Zare (Iran)	Alternate Member - İhsan Emiralioglu (Turkey) Other delegate - Merve Altan
The World Bank	Mark Cackler	

Non-voting Ex-officio members		Member	Other Delegation Members
Chair, System Management Board		Marco Ferroni	
Executive Director, CGIAR System Organization		Elwyn Grainger-Jones	
Center Representative 1: Convener of the Chairs of Center Boards of Trustees		Nicole Birrell	
Center Representative 2: Convener of the Center Directors General		Aly Abousabaa	
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)		Hans Dreyer	
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)		Malu Ndavi* (Day 2)	
Active Observers		Representative	Alternate & Other Delegates
CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)		Maggie Gill (Chair)	
Invited attendees		Representative	
France - Host Country of CGIAR System Organization		Bernard Hubert (National Institute for Agricultural Research)	
Trustee of the CGIAR Trust Fund		Darius Stangu (The World Bank); Marizmelda Carbonell Dugayo (The World Bank)	
CGIAR Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA)		Karen Macours (Chair)	
Additional participants			
European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD)		Nathalie Oberson (Executive Secretary, EIARD)	
World Bank		Jonathan Wadsworth, Lead Agricultural Specialist	
CGIAR System Organization <i>(Technical inputs for sessions; meeting management; logistics support)</i>		Karmen Bennett, System Council Secretary & Director, Board and Council Relations	
		Jamie Craig, Director, Financial and Digital Services	
		Olwen Cussen, Senior Associate, Board and Council Relations	
		Nadia Manning-Thomas, Board and Council Relations Manager	
		Kristina Röing de Nowina, Deputy Director, Funder and External Engagement	
		Victoria Pezzi, Meetings and Events Associate	
		Sonja Vermeulen, Director, Programs	
		André Zandstra, Director, Funder and External Engagement	

Session specific invitees	
Agenda Item 1,2 and 3	Yvonne Pinto (SRG member and theme leader)
	Claudia Sadoff (SRG member and theme leader)
	Michela Salvi (SRG Facilitator)
	Adinda Van Hemelrijck (SRG Facilitator)
Agenda Items 3b and 3c - Lightning Talks demonstrating CGIAR innovations from the field	Sylvia Alonso (A4NH/ILRI)
	Evan Girvetz (CCAFS/CIAT)
	Likimyelesh Nigussie (WLE/IWMI)
	Carolina Sansaloni (WHEAT/CIMMYT)
	Phyllis Ndung'u (CCAFS/LIVESTOCK)
	Rose Komugisha Basiita (FISH)

Apologies 8th System Council		
System Council Voting Members	Role	Name
European Commission	Member	Christophe Larose
Mexico	Member	Jorge Ruiz Rueda Souza
	Alternate	Miguel Narvaez
South Asia	Member	Sushil Kumar
	Alternate	N.A. Sisira Kumara
Active Observers	Role	Name
GFAR	Representative	Bongiwe N. Njobe

Annex 2: Membership of the System Reference Group as at 15-16 May 2019

Theme	Group 1 Research objectives and focus – defining a portfolio coverage	Group 2 Delivery model(s) – defining the pathway from innovation to impact	Group 3 Institutional arrangements – ensuring efficiency, impact and value for money
Co-Chairs	Marco Ferroni :: Tony Cavalieri		
Convener	Mellissa Wood - SC	Yvonne Pinto - SMB	Claudia Sadoff - DG
Members	Aly Abousabaa - DG	Alan Tollervey - SC	Nicole Birrell - SC
	Isatou Jallow - SMB	Amos Namanga Ngongi - SMB	Elwyn Grainger-Jones – SO
	Jonathan Wadsworth - SC	Barbara Wells - DG	Gordon MacNeil - SMB
	Michel Evéquoz -SC	Dandan Huang - SC	Kanayo Nwanze - SMB
	Rob Bertram - SC	Pedro Machado - SC	Mark Cackler - SC
			Michel Bernhardt - SC
			Geoff Hawtin – SBM