

9th System Council, 13-14 November 2019
Chengdu, P.R. China

Chair's Summary Meeting Highlights and Decisions

Dear System Council Members, Active Observers, and invited guests

I trust that each one of you present at the 9th System Council meeting felt, as I did, that we had been part of a momentous occasion as CGIAR nears its 50th anniversary. What the CGIAR does in the next 5-10 years will be very important for the future of the global food system, particularly in the face of the growing global climate emergency.

A sense of purpose and urgency was evident in the firm support expressed by the Council in Chengdu and the decision taken to unanimously endorse the [5 interconnected recommendations of the System Reference Group](#) for a 'One CGIAR' as recorded in the System Council communication to CGIAR Center staff on Thursday 14 November 2019.

It is salient to recognize that we most certainly could not have reached this point without the open-mindedness of all parts of the system who demonstrated a genuine willingness to work "as one", not only in reaching these ground-breaking agreements, but also in their desire to see them move forward into implementation.

I would also like to acknowledge the messages of support we received at the meeting from some significant global partners – including the Director General of FAO, Dr Qu Dongyu, and the President of the African Development Bank, Dr Akinwumi Adesina. We also had the opportunity to thank in person, our host of the meeting, Dr Tang Huajun, President of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), who unequivocally expressed his strong support for One CGIAR.

The full text of the Council's endorsement of the SRG recommendations, and other decisions taken during the meeting are given below in Annex 1; which is supplemented by Annex 2 with a collection of contributions from System Council members expressed during our deliberations. However, I would also like to share some context and provide a feel for the tenor of the meeting that I personally captured.

In my mind the Council is getting better at its job with each meeting we have – on this occasion there were some sensitive issues that were addressed conscientiously, openly and professionally, for which I am grateful. Members were mindful to ensure that arriving at a One CGIAR will require a process that addresses issues in the same thoughtful, transparent, and inclusive manner that generated the SRG recommendations. It was agreed that careful analysis of the risks and opportunities during implementation must be an integral part of the

One CGIAR delivery plan. We also recognized the role that each of us must play – alongside all other leaders across CGIAR – as ambassadors for change. We also agreed to engage additional specialist capacity to support the process as needed.

With respect to future funding we welcomed renewed commitments from Council members around the table to deliver on the aspirations to make One CGIAR a reality and deliver on our mission. An analysis undertaken with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was tabled and discussed which indicated that doubling funding to CGIAR is feasible if timely institutional reform is achieved and a coordinated resource mobilization effort is put into effect.

Other areas of on-going business that were highly appreciated and effectively addressed during the meeting are:

- The significant progress being made in delivering on the 2019-2021 CGIAR System Business Plan as reported in the recently published 2018 Performance Report.
- Live demonstrations of the new on-line dashboards on funding and delivery of results which created a great deal of interest and enthusiasm of Council members who are keen to start using them. These are very welcome tools that will radically improve access and use of real-time information and data.
- Great progress in development of the Gender, Diversity and Inclusion documentation which will enable One CGIAR to set the tone for reaching our stated diversity targets at all levels, including leadership positions.
- The Council approved the proposal for the CGIAR Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform and requested that the proponents of the two proposals collaborate to integrate certain components to forge a high-quality Platform with the potential to turn CGIAR into a leader in this space.
- Updates from the Chairs of the Independent Science for Development Council and the Standing Panel on Impact Assessment regarding their reflections on key lessons from recent reports. These should inform CGIAR's future research efforts. Both Chairs confirmed their readiness to contribute to development of a new 2030 research strategy.

In closing I would like to sincerely thank every Council member for their contributions to setting a unanimously agreed One CGIAR destination. I am confident that we will continue working together openly and collaboratively to make this essential change happen with all due expediency. As expressed by many of you during the meeting - "the time to act is now" - with your continued support, I have no doubt we will.

Yours sincerely,
Juergen Voegelé, Ph.D.
Chair, System Council

Annex 1 – Decisions taken and Agreed positions and actions

DECISIONS

SC/M9/DP1: Meeting Co-Chair

The System Council **appointed** Pedro Luiz Oliveira de Almeida Machado, voting member from the Latin America and Caribbean constituency as the non-voting Co-Chair for the meeting, pursuant to Article 5.2 of the CGIAR System Framework.

SC/M9/DP2: Adoption of the Agenda

The System Council **adopted** the Agenda issued on 8 November 2019 (document SC9-01).

SC/M9/DP3: System Reference Group recommendations for 'One CGIAR'

The System Council:

- **Endorsed** the package of recommendations set out in the document entitled 'One CGIAR' System Reference Group Recommendations to the System Council (SC9-02);
- With respect to the implementation of those recommendations, **endorsed** the proposed roles of the System Management Board, the One CGIAR Common Board, the Executive Management Team (including each of its Managing Directors), the General Assembly and the System Organization with respect to the change process as set out in the document, with advice and inputs from a Transition Reference Group;
- **Called upon** the System Management Board¹ and Centers to move purposefully to intensify collaboration to implement the recommendations, consistent with the target dates set out therein, based on clear milestones and adaptive management, ensuring that any key institutional decisions they take moving forward are consistent with the direction and destination of One CGIAR as set out in the package of recommendations; and
- **Requested** that the System Management Board update the System Council each quarter during the initial year of implementation, and thereafter at a frequency to be agreed.

2019-2021 CGIAR System 3-year business plan matters

SC/M9/DP4: Elevating gender equality research

Pursuant to Article 4(s) of the CGIAR System Framework, the System Council **approved** the recommended arrangements for a CGIAR Gender Equality in Food Systems Research Platform under the GENDER proposal and transition plan.

¹ The System Management Board, which will operate as the One CGIAR Common Board from the date when the One Common Board comes into operation.

AGREED ACTIONS

SC/M9/AP1: Transforming from the CGIAR System Reference Group to a Transition Reference Group

The System Council:

- i. **Noted** that the System Management Office will facilitate a process by which the System Reference Group will transform into a Transition Reference Group to support implementation of the endorsed SRG recommendations (as foreshadowed in paragraph 36c of the System Council endorsed SRG Recommendations paper), with that new Transition Reference Group being established on the same principles as the SRG, namely a genuine willingness to work “as one” across all parts of CGIAR.
- ii. **Noted** that the ‘Initial Steps and Transition Support to One CGIAR’ document provides a solid foundation on which to deliver that transition process.

SC/M9/AP2: Taking forward Gender, Diversity and Inclusion

The System Council:

- i. **Expressed** support for the proposed ‘Framework for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion in CGIAR’s Workplaces’ and the accompanying proposed ‘Action Plan for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion in CGIAR’s Workplaces’ covering the 2-year period 2020-2021;
- ii. **Noted** progress in the proportional representation of women in CGIAR Centers and the CGIAR System Organization and the measures proposed in the proposed Framework and Action Plan to address underlying causes in areas where representation is not at target levels; and
- iii. **Highlighted** the key opportunity presented by the transition to One CGIAR to enact the diversity principles at all levels.

Other business

SC/M9/AP3: Role of CGIAR in global food system dialogue

The System Council:

- i. **Recognized** the value of a common narrative around global food systems to move the dialogue, tackle polarization in a complex policy area and bridge the gap between policy and science; and
- ii. **Requested** that potential mechanisms be explored for a global approach to the food systems dialogue (including, but not necessarily, an intergovernmental panel approach) and that the outcomes of that exploration be considered at the System Council’s June 2020 meeting.

Annex 2 – Members' reflections on the One CGIAR recommendations

*****Note: these comments are unattributed, and are not verbatim, but are paraphrased to reflect the key messages conveyed. Where the same comments were made by multiple participants, these have not been repeated*****

On the recommendations and CGIAR's direction

- The world is changing, and the diagnosis is changing; the risk of inaction is far greater than moving forward boldly. If we do this right, we can prove that CGIAR can change and become fit-for-purpose for the 21st century.
- The recommendations which deliver on the objectives of Window 1 funder – science-led developments to reduce poverty and hunger. We should move forward quickly with implementation.
- The global challenges move faster than we can – we must not delay any decisions as this will have impacts on those who will inherit this planet.
- Change must be for the purpose of delivery of CGIAR's work, and one system for global agricultural research is desirable.
- The focus is on the shared agenda and impact through a new program and funding modality with partners, and greater transparency and accountability.
- The recommendations acknowledge that CGIAR must improve its arrangements to increase its impact. CGIAR must be more than the sum of its units, with smaller numbers of operational units and greater country-level collaboration and strategies. Having a small number of major programs, collaborating not competing with national programs, is supported.
- The recommendation for partnerships with regional governments will achieve synergy and achieve impact faster than as individuals. CGIAR needs to work together with NARS in the environment they know best. We need synergy and we need teamwork and that can only happen if we are One CGIAR.
- The Centers grasp the challenge, embrace efforts to address it and support the direction of One CGIAR.
- 2021 represents a key moment to launch new programs, and CGIAR should be ready with a new and compelling mission at that moment.
- One CGIAR will facilitate the establishment of stronger partnerships and the adoption of an integrated approach to research and knowledge generation at global/regional/country levels. A united governance structure will contribute to achievement of these desired results.
- The recommendations are interconnected; Funders should commit to harmonization of funding aligned to the shared agenda. (Several Funders indicated that funding will only be able to be maintained and increase if the recommendations are implemented effectively).

- Country coordination, particularly as a collaborative opportunity with NARS is critical, presenting the opportunity to incorporate global aspects into national agendas, and vice versa. It will be important to ensure that One CGIAR does not create un-necessary competition for funds at the national level.
- The recommendations are realistic and pragmatic. Urgency is important to keep moving forward, working adaptively.
- The recommendations respond to what is needed; innovation that flows faster to deliver to those that need them most.
- Our ability to tell a compelling evidence-based story on our impact in 5 impact areas is crucial – the SRG got it right by focusing on the higher-level structure. We should respect and trust in the SRG's work and the process.
- The recommendations are rooted in the structure of CGIAR, whereas previous reforms have not attempted to tackle structural issues. Form must follow function, to deliver research. Having a single entity structure around a single mission should not be viewed as radical, but inevitable. We cannot deliver on the challenges we face today without the proper structure.
- CGIAR must walk as one and deliver as one. It should be leaner and cohesive, avoiding duplication but ensuring diversity in delivery locations. An impact focus based on clear targets to ensure results at scale should be the *modus operandi*. Larger and more sustainable funding is critical to achieve this.

On considerations as implementation is taken forward

- We are ready to decide on the 'what' but acknowledge the need for greater exploration of the 'how' in implementation.
- There is a need to keep moving forward in a flexible, stepwise approach – and keep the momentum.
- The One Common Board, and its timely implementation, will be key to enacting the recommendations.
- Centers should come together for the best possible outcome; with the One Common Board crucial for success; it should be appointed as soon as possible.
- The design process for research programs should be more inclusive than previously, follow clear rules, be strategic, and align with comparative advantage.
- CGIAR should showcase its forward-looking compelling research strategy at the Global Food Summit in 2021.
- Recognizing the urgency, implementation must be a phased approach, and it will be important to explore detail of legal and governance aspects, policy aspects of the mission and how host country government views will be incorporated.
- There is commitment from Centers to a timely implementation process, which will be discussed in more detail at the December 2019 General Assembly. There are some concerns about due diligence undertaken and the support available to Board Chairs and Directors General, to implement the recommendations.
- Unified governance represents the most complex change, and it will be important to implement correctly, including engagement with non-discretionary members of existing boards. Host country relationships are of key importance.
- The link between the impact areas (which are strongly supported) and the SRF should be made clear

- It should be highlighted that people are CGIAR's key resource and should be attracted to work at CGIAR – research excellence is a mobilizing factor for staff and scientists.
- Harmonized policies will be very important, and in implementing shared services, it is important not to let perfection make an enemy of the good.
- A more in-depth risk assessment approach will be important in implementation, particularly around attracting and retaining good people, and bringing in additional change management expertise. Broader host country consultation will also be critical.
- CGIAR at 50 will be a key moment to reflect and look forward; priority elements to achieve by that milestone should be identified.

Annex 2 - Meeting Participants

Meeting Leadership		
Chair: Juergen Voegele	<i>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 (**).</i>	
Co-Chair: Pedro Machado		
System Council Voting Members (listed alphabetically)	Member representative	Member Alternates & Other Delegation Members
AfDB	Martin Fregene (from Day 2 PM)	
Australia	Andrew Campbell	Alternate Member - Mellissa Wood
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Tony Cavalieri	Alternate Member - Enock Chikava
Canada	Stephen Potter	
East Asia & Pacific (voting member China)	Dandan Huang**	
Germany & Belgium	Sebastian Lesch**	Other delegates - Michel Bernhardt
Japan	Motoaki Komiya	Other delegates - Miyuki Iiyama, Naoko Oka
Latin America and Caribbean (voting member Brazil)	Pedro Machado (Brazil)	
The Netherlands	Wijnand van Ijssel	Other delegates - Paul van de Logt
Norway	Daniel van Gilst	
South Asia	Trilochan Mohapatra (India)	Alternate Member - Sisira Kumara (Sri Lanka) Other delegates: A.R. Sengupta
Sub-Saharan Africa (voting member Nigeria)	Yarama D. Ndirpaya (Nigeria)	
Sweden	Eva Ohlsson	Alternate Member - Philip Chiverton
Switzerland	Michel Évéquoz	
United States of America	Rob Bertram	Alternate Member - Eric Witte
West Asia & North Africa (voting member Iran)	Rasoul Zare (Iran)	Alternate Member - Ayfer Şahin (Turkey) Other delegate - Merve Altan
The World Bank	Mark Cackler	Alternate Member - Michael Morris
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	Nicole Birrell	
Center Representative 2: Convener of the Center Directors General	Aly Abousabaa	
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations	Hans Dreyer	Selvaraju Ramasamy
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	Paul Winters	
Active Observers	Representative	Alternate & Other Delegates
CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)	Holger Meinke (Chair)	
Invited attendees	Representative	
France - Host Country of CGIAR System Organization	Frederic Lapeyrie (Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation); Bernard Hubert (National Institute for Agricultural Research)	
Trustee of the CGIAR Trust Fund	Darius Stangu (The World Bank)	
CGIAR System Council's Assurance Oversight Committee	Saad Bounjoua (Chair)	
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)	
CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council	Lesley Torrance; Suneetha Kadiyala (Members)	
World Bank	Jonathan Wadsworth, Lead Climate Change Specialist	
CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat	Allison Grove Smith, Director	
CGIAR System Organization (Technical inputs for sessions; meeting management; logistics support)	Karmen Bennett, System Council Secretary & Director, Board and Council Relations	
	Jamie Craig, Director, Financial and Digital Services	
	Sonja Vermeulen, Director, Programs	
	André Zandstra, Director, Funder and External Engagement	
	Kristina Roing de Nowina, Deputy Director, Funder and External Engagement	
	Nadia Manning-Thomas, Board and Council Relations Manager	
	Olwen Cussen, Senior Associate, Board and Council Relations	
	Roland Sundstrom, Senior Advisor, Executive Director's Office	
	Victoria Pezzi, Meetings and Events Associate	
	Madina Bazarova, Head, CGIAR System Internal Audit Function	

Connecting remotely		
Alan Tollervey - Day 1 and Day 2 PM	UK, System Council Voting Member	
Elise Perset - Session 2 and 6	Director, Legal and Office Services, CGIAR System Organization	
Session specific invitees		
Agenda Item 6	Claudia Sadoff, SMB Gender Champion	
Apologies		
System Council Voting Members	Role	Name
European Commission	Member	Christophe Larose
Mexico	Member	Jorge Ruiz Rueda Souza
	Alternate	Miguel Narvaez
Active Observers	Role	Name
GFAR		Chair (or designate)