

CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY
Extraordinary General Assembly of the Centers
12 and 13 December 2019, Rome, Italy

Purpose:

This document provides a high-level summary of the overall sense of the Extraordinary General Assembly of Centers held in December 2019. It highlights selected items that the meeting identified as opportunities to further inform implementation of One CGIAR, noting that a more detailed set of inputs will be shared to inform an updated version of the 'Initial Steps and Transition Support to One CGIAR' for consideration by the System Management Board at its forthcoming 28-29 January 2020 meeting.

Via one of the appendices, this Summary also serves as the record of the formal decisions taken by the Extraordinary General Assembly of Centers under its role described in the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization.

Meeting Co-Chairs:

- **Nicole Birrell**, 2019 Convener of CGIAR Center Board of Trustees' Chairs
- **Aly Abousabaa**, 2019 Convener of CGIAR Center Directors General

Prepared by: Board and Council Relations unit of the System Organization under the direction of the Co-Chairs of the General Assembly of the Centers (pursuant to Article 11.c of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization)

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CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY

Hosted by the now 'Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT' at its headquarters in Italy, we were encouraged to see that every Center/Alliance ensured that they were represented by both Board and Center leadership at this important meeting as the System collectively builds momentum towards the timely delivery of a truly 'One CGIAR'. That we could come together so quickly after the CGIAR System Council's unanimous endorsement¹ of the CGIAR System Reference Group's Recommendations ('SRG Recommendations') at its recent Chengdu meeting, reinforces the collective commitment that we had earlier emphasized on behalf of the CGIAR Centers in our shared statement to the System Council.²

Importantly, our December 2019 Rome meeting was the first time that we could come together in person as all CGIAR's Centers/Alliances to take stock of the implementation of One CGIAR, benefiting from the attendance of the System Council Chair, Dr. Juergen Voegelé, and CGIAR System Management Board Chair, Dr. Marco Ferroni, during the first half day of our two-day meeting.

Framing and approach

Early framing by Juergen Voegelé reminded us of the urgency required to address issues like climate change and reinforced that the world needs more targeted contributions from CGIAR that are delivered in a much more integrated and aligned way. We also reflected on the clarity and uniformity of messaging we heard from CGIAR's Funders during the meeting in Chengdu. We are all clearly very aligned that business as usual for CGIAR is not the way for us to collectively meet the world's expectations and needs – and that we all feel strongly that we have so very much more to add to address the challenges of the 21st Century.

From there, colleagues will recall that we took the opportunity for our extraordinary meeting to proceed with two key parts:

- Most time was spent in workshop mode, to provide Center leadership with a dedicated moment to understand the outcomes of the System Reference Group process and formulate collective implementation suggestions taking into account the version 2 draft of the 'Initial Steps and Transition Support to One CGIAR' document ('Initial Steps Paper') that was updated post-Chengdu. This provided a valuable opportunity to complement the strategic vision of the SRG Recommendations with the operational expertise and experience held by Center leadership.
- A short formal session of the General Assembly focused on taking decisions that fall under its mandate as set out in the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, and which are documented following this summary.

¹ SC Chair's summary is accessible at: <https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2019/11/SC9-Chairs-Summary.pdf> having been preceded with a 'Message to CGIAR Staff' dated 14 November 2019 as shared here: <https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2019/12/Message-for-CGIAR-One-CGIAR.pdf>

² Appendix 1 sets out the message agreed by CGIAR's Centers/Alliances and delivered during the System Council's deliberative session on the SRG Recommendations, as now endorsed.

One CGIAR implementation pathways – key themes

We trust that colleagues share our sense that what took place last week was a gathering with good energy. The result was the identification of a small set of suggested more concrete pathways to deliver on One CGIAR, which we acknowledged would be important to provide to the System Management Board as quickly as possible to inform revisions of the Initial Steps Paper.

At the highest level – these pathways comprised two main themes:

- As the Centers and System Organization embrace the 'One CGIAR Common Board' model to deliver unified governance, the opportunity to continue to receive the highly appreciated advice of a small number of Center-specific board members for Center-specific topics exists on an ongoing basis. These Center-specific people are not members of the 'One CGIAR Common Board'. Rather, when those common board members shift their focus to a purely Center-specific topic, the center-specific Board includes the experience and counsel of those persons, in addition to the required ex-officio members under the relevant legal agreements of each continuing legal entity.
- A One CGIAR Executive Team, appointed by and accountable to the One CGIAR Common Board³, to be comprised of three Managing Directors – each with responsibility and formal accountability for a specific Managing Director Portfolio, together with collective responsibility to operate and manage One CGIAR as a team. Whilst ongoing experience may further evolve the model over the longer term, the strong sense in the room was that One CGIAR would be well-advanced by starting with the Portfolios of: leadership and stewardship of the One CGIAR science agenda; cross-System external relations/resource mobilization; and cross-System operations.

We acknowledged that it will be important that as individual Centers/ Alliances, we formally obtain Center/Alliance-specific endorsements of our collective thinking on how we more concretely take forward the SRG's strategic proposal for unified governance and an integrated operational structure under a One CGIAR Executive Team. A separate document that captures the emerging consensus from our meeting will be distributed to enable the conversation at Center/Alliance Board with an agreed timeline for a response by Boards set for no later than 20 January 2020 and earlier if at all practicable.

Important also for the meeting were the membership and working modalities of what are referred to as Transition Advisory Groups ('TAGs') in the Initial Steps Paper. Building on experience, there is a clear need to ensure much greater Center membership in the TAGs.

This will be a major element of the formal communication to the System Management Board referred to under the Concrete Actions heading below – and one that we are confident is already well appreciated as critical for successful implementation of One CGIAR.

³ With the System Management Board being the body to take this forward in the interim.

Concrete actions we set ourselves

There were again two major themes to the actions that we believed as a group are time-sensitive if we are to meet the challenges for CGIAR in the spirit of proceeding with pace, and yet ensure that we have a sound basis to do so.

Theme 1 – Obtaining comprehensive materials to support a decision to re-constitute the SMB with persons who will be the common board members across all Center/Alliance Boards

With reference to section D.1 of Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly (*Agree upon the process and criteria for nomination of SMB members and appoint the SMB members*), the General Assembly requested that the System Management Office develop an approach for the 2020 SMB Nominations Committee for approval by the General Assembly of the Centers as soon as possible in early 2020 (including by electronic decision making before our next meetings) that:

- Sets out the required amendments to the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization to provide for a reconstituted System Management Board that can then in turn be appointed by each Center/Alliance-specific Board as not less than 2/3rd majority of discretionary members of that Center/Alliance Board (and thus deliver on the 'One CGIAR Common Board' concept);
- Incorporates the System Council endorsed SRG recommendation that an equal number of Center-affiliated and Funder-affiliated members serve on that Nominations Committee for the 2020 year; and
- Sets out the decision-making sequence to put those arrangements formally in place in 2020.

Theme 2 – Ensuring that the collective inputs from our workshop inform next steps

Noting that the System Management Board will come together to formally consider a further updated Initial Steps Paper over 28-29 January 2020, our commitment to the Centers/Alliance leadership group is to ensure that the more detailed inputs and observations from the workshop portion of the meeting are collated and shared with you by no later than 10 January, and also provided to our System Management Office colleagues to facilitate their task of preparing materials for System Management Board consideration.

Concretely, this input includes:

- Sharing our proposed concept and membership of the TAGs to support the implementation of the recommendations to One CGIAR, together with the recommendation that a 'roadmap' be developed for each to guide their operations;
- The need for (i) relevant legal reviews/analysis (including accessing the opportunity that the System Organization has provided to secure that advice, as desired) to be

undertaken and (ii) reciprocal due diligence to be carried out by each Center on the other Centers, to have in place the right information and systems for moving forward with recommended actions towards One CGIAR;

- The use of an independent third party to support the change management process, with an interim senior advisor on change management supporting the One CGIAR Executive Team once appointed by the System Management Board; and
- The crucial importance of comprehensive two-way communication, particularly making use of a common set of communication content and templates, to keep staff informed and engaged and for providing updates to relevant groups.

Maintaining our own momentum

We also agreed to be dynamic in our own operations – by agreeing to:

- Keep the previously planned February 2020 General Assembly meeting dates, but transform this meeting into virtual progress updates/decision making sessions;
- Take other decisions as a General Assembly of Centers before then to the extent possible; and
- Hold the 4th General Assembly of Centers as an in-person gathering during mid-March 2020.

In this way, we affirmed our commitment as the General Assembly of Centers to being ready to take decisions under its mandate as soon as we have adequate information to hand. We also affirmed our strongly held desire to play a key role in the One CGIAR transition process moving forward, and to be an important part of the communication and change management efforts that will be essential ingredients.

There is no doubt that delivering One CGIAR will require a high degree of enthusiasm, energy and time from everyone across CGIAR, but also a recognition that these changes need to be made together to continue to grow the relevance and the capacity of CGIAR to address the urgent challenges facing the world. We took from the meeting the sense that the members of the General Assembly stand ready to contribute their expertise and experience through the relevant TAGs – in partnership with our System Council and SMB Independent member colleagues as well as other partners and advisers as appropriate.

Sincerely,
Nicole Birrell & Aly Abousabaa

Index of additional materials

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APPENDIX 1 – Message of CGIAR Centers to System Council's 9th meeting

*** Transcript of statement as delivered ***

Presented by Nicole Birrell, Ex-officio non-voting member of the CGIAR System Council in her capacity as one of the two CGIAR Center representatives to the CGIAR System Council, and in the presence of Aly Abousabaa, Ex-officio non-voting member of the System Council, as the second of the two CGIAR Center representatives to the CGIAR System Council

--- Begins ---

Based on their interactions with fellow Board Chairs and Directors General, the Conveners wish to convey the following as a general sense of the CGIAR Centers current views on the SRG Recommendations.

The 15 centers fully grasp the enormity of the challenge of attaining a food and nutritionally secure world under conditions of increasing population and changing climate.

The centers are acutely aware of the role that science must play in responding to these global challenges and a need for a much stronger CGIAR response. Thus the Centers embrace the efforts towards One CGIAR and appreciate the work of the SRG and the recommendations made in the document before this Council.

The Centers support the direction of all recommendations and under the principles of adaptive management set out in the SRG document, commit to a timely process to consider the operational implications and inform related Center Board decisions.

While there is broad support for the directions embodied in SRG Recommendations 1, 3B, 3C, 4 and 5, subject to operational considerations as mentioned, there is also a view that the implications of recommendations 2 and 3A need more detailed analysis in order to best support the intended outcomes.

A non-exhaustive list of substantive issues across all recommendations has been developed.

The Centers will meet as the General Assembly of Centers in mid-December for the first time as a group to consider the package of recommendations endorsed by the System Council and their optimal implementation.

--- Ends ---

APPENDIX 2 - Formal Decisions taken

GA/M3A/DP1: 4th General Assembly timing and location

Pursuant to Article 5.3 of the Charter of the CGIAR System Organization, the Centers **confirmed** that the 4th in-person meeting of the General Assembly of Centers would be hosted by IRRI at its headquarters in Los Baños, The Philippines, in mid-to-late March 2020, with the precise date being confirmed after consideration of the availability of the venue, and the pre-existing commitments of the Co-Conveners.

GA/M3A/DP2: Election of Co-Conveners for GA from March 2020

Pursuant to item D1.ii of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly⁴ regarding the respective Conveners of the Board Chairs and Directors-General and thus Co-Chairs of the General Assembly of Centers, and with effect from the closing of the 4th General Assembly meeting to be held in March 2020, the General Assembly:

- i. **Elected** Gareth Johnstone as Convener of the Center Directors General; and
- ii. **Elected** Nicole Birrell as Convener of the Chairs of the Center Boards of Trustees, **taking note** of the intention of the Board Chairs group to bring to the 4th General Assembly an optimal plan for providing support to the Convener in carrying out the tasks.

GA/M3A/DP3: Role of the General Assembly

The General Assembly of Centers **agreed** that at the forthcoming 4th meeting, the Centers consider whether to review the role of the General Assembly within the context of One CGIAR.

GA/M3A/DP4: Amendments to General Assembly Rules of Procedure

The General Assembly of Centers **agreed** to amend the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly by:

- (a) **Adding new sub-paragraphs (iii) and (iv) in section 'D6. Approve the Center representatives to serve on the System Council' as follows:**

The Co-Conveners of the General Assembly of Centers:

[...]

- (iii) *Participate, as necessary, in other strategic groups or processes as a representative of the Centers****

⁴ <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10568/92026/Rules-of-Procedure-General-Assembly-adopted-23-January-2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

(iv) *Are entitled to have their reasonable travel and hotel costs related to in-person attendance at the foregoing in-person events met according to the relevant policies of the System Organization, with the time commitment of the Board Chairs' Convener being compensated from the annual budget of the General Assembly of Centers****.*

(b) Adding in respect of item (iii), the following text in the "Additional description/explanation" column of the Rules of Procedure:

**** This participation is delegable to, respectively, another Board Chair or Director General, on the prior notice to the convener of the relevant meeting absent formal terms of reference being agreed by that group in advance that determines that attendance will be personal and non-delegable.*

(c) Adding in respect of item (vi) the following text in the "Additional description/explanation" column of the Rules of Procedure:

***** The following provisions apply:*

(a) Retroactive from 1 August 2019, travel and hotel costs will be reimbursed in line with the logistics information provided for such in-person events (with private preferences being at the cost of the affiliated Center);

(b) Effective from 1 January 2020, appropriate contractual arrangements will be put in place between the CGIAR System Organization and the Board Chairs' Convener for covering the time commitments of the Board Chairs' Convener for in-person attendance at all representative meetings other than meetings of the General Assembly of the Centers (being a Center/Alliance own-cost event), with the rate of compensation being tied to the affiliated-Center's own rate for compensation of the in-person time commitment of the relevant official; and

(c) Annually, the System Organization will provide a written report to the General Assembly of the Centers on the past calendar year's expenditure under this item, and the proposed budget for the forthcoming period.

Appendix 3: Attendees of the Extraordinary General Assembly

*Center Board Chairs Convener, ** Center DGs Convener, *** GA Member Designate, **** Additional attendee with observer status

Center		Names	Position
AfricaRice		Carol Kramer-LeBlanc	Board of Trustees Chair
		Kolade Olatifede***	Director of Finance and Operations
Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT		Julia Marton-Lefèvre	Common Board Chair, and Chair of Bioversity International
		Juan Lucas Restrepo	Director General, Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT
CIFOR-ICRAF	CIFOR	Claire O'Connor	Common CIFOR-ICRAF Board of Trustees Chair
		Robert Nasi	Director General, CIFOR
	ICRAF	Getachew Engida***	Common CIFOR-ICRAF Board of Trustees member
		Tony Simons	Director General ICRAF Executive Director, CIFOR-ICRAF effective merger
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
ICRISAT		Paco Sereme	Governing Board Chair
		Peter Carberry	Director General
IFPRI		Derek Byerlee***	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 Governors Chair
		Claudia Sadoff	Director General
WorldFish		Baba Yusuf Abubakar	Board of Trustees Chair (<i>remotely</i>)
		Gareth Johnstone	Director General

Invited Guests

IFPRI	Johan Swinnen**** (Director General elect IFPRI, commencing Jan 2020)
Juergen Voegelé	Chair, CGIAR System Council
Marco Ferroni	Chair, CGIAR System Management Board
Elwyn Grainger-Jones	Executive Director, CGIAR System Organization

Additional content and operational support

Karmen Bennett	Director, Board and Council Relations, CGIAR System Organization
Nadia Manning-Thomas	Board and Council Relations Manager, CGIAR System Organization
Andre Zandstra (<i>RM session</i>)	Director, Funder & External Engagement, System Organization
Helen Thompson (<i>for in-camera sessions</i>)	Board Secretary, The Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT