

Appointment of member positions to CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)

Purpose

This document sets out the recommendations, background, and rationale for appointing three new members to CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) as presented by the System Council approved ISDC Nominations Panel. The System Council is asked **to review and approve individually the appointment of 3 new members of the CGIAR's ISDC – for a three-year term, subject to confirmation after a one-year assessment.**

Annex I provides biographies of the three candidates; Annex II provides the ISDC Nominations Panel members; Annex III contains background and details on the ISDC appointments process.

Proposed Decisions

Based on the ISDC Nomination Panel's recommendation, the System Council is asked to:

- 1a. Appoint **Fetien Abay Abera** as member of the CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) for a three-year term with effect from 1 June 2021.
- 1b. Appoint **Nompumelelo H. Obokoh** as member of the CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) for a three-year term with effect from 1 June 2021.
- 1c. Appoint **Magali Garcia** as member of the CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) for a three-year term with effect from 1 June 2021.
2. Take note that, pursuant to the SC-approved ISDC Member Competencies framework, ISDC members are appointed for an initial three-year term with a one-year assessment period for confirmation of continuation of the term.

Special notice on 'Consent Agenda' status of this document

This item is presented to the System Council according to Article 7.1(a) of the System Council's Rules of Procedure, permitting a 'consent agenda' consisting of items that require formal System Council decision but are submitted as a group for adoption by the System Council without discussion.

Further to the rules of procedure, **should a System Council member or Active Observer wish to remove an individual item from the Consent Agenda, that request should be communicated to the Secretary of the System Council by close of business Paris time on Wednesday 2 June 2021.**

Document category: Working document of the System Council. There is no restriction on the circulation of this document

Prepared by: The 2021 ISDC Nominations Panel (see Annex II) with support from the Nominations Panel Secretariat.

Brief Background (more details found in Annex III)

1. Based on the ISDC terms of reference, an ISDC Nominations Panel was tasked to carry out a process to recommend three members to fill vacancies arising, as shown below.

Member (Gender)	Role	Appointment end date
Holger Meinke (M)	Chair	20 September 2022
Lesley Torrance (F)	Member	30 September 2022
Chris Barrett (M)	Member	30 September 2022
Suneetha Kadiyala (F)	Member	30 September 2022
Andrew Ash (M)	Member	30 September 2022
Nighisty Ghezae (F)	Member	31 December 2021*
Vacant	Member	-----
Vacant	Member	-----

* Member has extraordinary extension through 31 Dec 2021 as additional temporary 9th member

2. **The advertisement for new members** issued on 27 January 2021 [here](#), was targeted to bring in 3 new members with additional key competencies and diversity required for the ISDC's effective composition, with specific disciplines and skills being particularly sought in 2021 around: innovation systems and/or development; agriculture, ecology and/or ecosystems; and plant breeding. Particular emphasis was placed on seeking candidates whose origin, experiences, and normal work environments are from regions where CGIAR's work is focused. Applicants from Sub-Saharan Africa, who are women and non-binary persons, and who are early- to mid-career researchers and science-for-development experts were encouraged to apply.
3. **The Panel process** after the February 26, 2021 application deadline:
 - a. 168 applications were received and subsequently pre-filtered based on the requirements, eligibility, and key criteria;
 - b. Conflicts of interest declarations of Panel members were reviewed, and mitigation measures implemented as recommended by CGIAR's Legal Counsel;
 - c. The Panel rigorously reviewed the submissions and shortlisted the applications candidates individually and as a collective Panel;
 - d. In total the Panel conducted 11 interviews;
 - e. References received from named referees were reviewed by the Panel;
 - f. The Panel analyzed the various data points for the candidates along with looking at the mandate, workplan and current composition of the ISDC – carefully considering expertise, geographic representation, and diversity;
 - g. The Panel undertook processes to arrive at full agreement on the three recommendations to the System Council.
4. **The Panel is confident that these three recommended candidates will bring both essential competencies and valuable diversity to their ISDC role.** The persons recommended are well-known professionals in their respective fields with internationally recognized achievements, and are well grounded in geographical settings to bring important experiences and perspectives. They will add value to the overall composition of ISDC and its mandate areas and workplan and more broadly to One CGIAR.

Annex I: Biographies (summarized from applicants' materials)

<p>Fetien Abay Abera</p>	<p><u>Country of origin and current residence:</u> Ethiopia</p> <p><u>Current position(s):</u> interim President and the Vice-President for Research and Community Services at Mekelle University</p> <p><u>Qualifications:</u> Ph.D in plant breeding and seed science; M.Sc rural resources management; B.Sc in plant science.</p>
<p><u>Brief summary of expertise and experience:</u></p> <p>Dr. Fetien has more than 15 years of experience focused on teaching the next generation of agricultural scientists in Ethiopia and on plant breeding and extension – giving particular attention to working with resource poor women farmers in drylands areas. She would bring to the ISDC and CGIAR a mixture of academic strengths and leadership with hands-on plant breeding experience with small holder farmers.</p> <p>She led the formulation and teaching of the PhD program in Plant Breeding and Seed Science at Mekelle University– where she is currently interim President. Dr. Fetien has a diverse and deep experience in agricultural research and development – having worked with the Ethiopian Bureau of Agriculture, the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research, and the university. She believes strongly in farmers’ knowledge and the importance of their involvement in Participatory Plant Breeding . She has trained extension agents and agronomists to disseminate her knowledge gained and varieties produced. Her six climate-resilient, high-yielding, high-quality barley varieties are being used by an estimated 100,000 farmers. Through her leadership, Mekelle University and other universities have addressed how to reduce the high levels of aflatoxins in ground nuts. She has produced nearly 40 peer-reviewed journal articles with nearly 1,300 citations and numerous book chapters, peer-reviewed proceedings, and research reports.</p> <p>Dr. Fetien has worked with strong collaboration with diverse actions. She has worked with private sector and government organizations such as Ethiopian Seed Enterprises, Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency and more. She has previously collaborated with several CGIAR Centers (Bioversity, ICARDA, ICRISAT) and was an AWARD fellow.</p>	
<p>Find out more at: https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=sXgEFm4AAAAJ&hl=en</p>	

<p>Nompumelelo H. Obokoh</p>	<p><u>Country of origin and current residence:</u> South Africa</p> <p><u>Current position(s):</u> Chair of the Board of the National Research Foundation in South Africa; and Consultant</p> <p><u>Qualifications:</u> Ph. D plant biotechnology; MSc microbiology; BSc. Honours Microbiology; MSc. Microbiology and Biochemistry.</p>
<p><u>Brief summary of expertise and experience:</u></p> <p>With more than 18 years working in agricultural research and innovation systems with a focus on biotechnology, Dr. Obokoh has led many multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary, and multi-national teams and efforts in this field. In addition to extensive experience in South Africa, she has worked throughout Southern, East, and West Africa. She would bring to the ISDC and CGIAR a strong background in biotechnology, advocacy, private-public partnerships –including with NARES, intellectual property rights issues, and scaling-up technologies.</p> <p>She was appointed as a Commissioner on the South African Presidential Commission on the 4th Industrial Revolution, worked as CEO of AfricaBio (an independent non-profit association in the biotechnology sector) and as Divisional Head for Innovation Support and Protection (IPR) of Companies & Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC), and with the African Agricultural Technology Foundation in Abuja and in Nairobi. Prior to this, she was a Senior Manager at the Agricultural Research Council of South Africa and a Post-Doctoral Research Associate at the University of Cambridge, UK.</p> <p>Through these positions she has gained extensive leadership experiences in organizational business strategy development, planning, and execution; organizational development and capacity building; innovation chain management; building strategy partnerships; biotechnology research and development; advocacy, policy development and analysis; research program and budget management; and resource mobilization. She has strong experience establishing public-private partnerships with various national and international organizations.</p> <p>She has presented her work at numerous conferences domestically and in international events and has received several awards including the Mandela Cambridge Scholarship, Mandela Magdalene College Scholarship, Fellow of the Cambridge Commonwealth Society, as well as the Rothamstead International - African Research Fellowship.</p>	
<p>Find out more at: attached CV: https://docs.google.com/document/d/17cwWxCKI33VHtZNrvYYgesYJgQL7Sb3N5DRiEblgTg8/edit?usp=sharing</p>	

<p>Magali Garcia</p>	<p><u>Country of origin and current residence:</u> Bolivia</p> <p><u>Current position(s):</u> Tenured Researcher and Professor of Ecology, Climatology, and Climate Change</p> <p><u>Qualifications:</u> Ph.D. in Applied Biological Sciences; MSc Soil and Water; MSc. Water Resources Engineering; BSc. Agronomist Engineer.</p>
<p><u>Brief summary of expertise and experience:</u></p> <p>Dr. Garcia has a demonstrated excellence in the field of bioclimatology, with expertise in working effectively across disciplinary boundaries. She is an experienced scientist especially on eco-systemic climate change impacts on agriculture, land, and water management of mainly small agricultural communities and farmers. She understands the scientific complexities and circularity of elements of sustainable agricultural systems while having a strong background in working with stakeholders from outside of academia. She can bring together science and development approaches to balance the need to advance understanding of the complexity of the food systems within which she works.</p> <p>Currently a Tenured Researcher and Professor at the Faculty of Engineering of the Universidad Mayor de San Andres, she is also the local coordinator of a large project on watershed strategies to reduce land degradation in the Andes and the Coordinator of training programs of Land and Water resources responding to climate pressures. Further she has worked with several other significant climate change projects in Bolivia and elsewhere in the Andes focused on irrigation strategy, agricultural production of main commodities, sustainable management of arid drylands, vulnerability and adaptation of small Andean communities and more.</p> <p>Dr. Garcia was appointed as one of the 14 world scientists as part of the Scientific Technical Committee of the “4 per 1000 Initiative: Soils for Food Security and Climate”. She has drafted policy-related documents – such as the National Adaptation Plan of Action, the Plan for Land Degradation Neutrality of Bolivia and the Bolivian Drought initiative. She was awarded the Marie Curie prize for women in Science from the Bolivian National Academy of Science and won the Bolivian National Prize for Science and Technology aside from several other awards. She has worked in partnership with local stakeholders, regional and national governments, and international organizations such as UNESCO, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, FAO, the Flemish Government of Belgium, the McKnight Foundation, and beyond.</p> <p>Dr. Garcia would provide grounded, solid inputs, particularly from Latin America, and analytical contributions to the work of the ISDC.</p>	
<p>Find out more at: CV Magali Garcia and List of publications 16052021.pdf - Google Drive</p>	

Annex II: ISDC Nominations Panel (appointed by the System Council)

The individuals below were the members of the 2021 ISDC Nominations Panel ('Panel') appointed by the System Council. The Panel was supported throughout the process by a Secretariat Team from the CGIAR System Organization.

System Council Members (nominated by SC Chair)

- **Michel Bernhardt**, SIMEC Chair ('Panel Chair')
- **AnnaMaria Oltorp**, System Council Member from Sweden

Science leaders (nominated by SC Chair)

- **Jutta Werner**, Project Manager for Adaptation to Climate Change at ZUG gGmbH
- **Ed Rege**, CEO/Chairman of Emerge Centre for Innovation Africa

Person(s) fully external to the CGIAR

- **Judith Francis**, Independent strategic and policy advisory on innovation and agri-food and nutrition systems. Recently retired from CTA.

Invited **observer** from current ISDC

- **Suneetha Kadiyala**, <https://cas.cgiar.org/isdc/team/suneetha-kadiyala>

Annex III: Background to Panel recommendation of new members

5. The Terms of Reference for the ISDC, as approved on 4 October 2018, include **provisions for the membership of the ISDC** such that:
 - a. Article 4.1: *“ISDC will consist of **up to eight (8) standing members**, which number can be reviewed by the System Council based on need and required expertise coverage, one of whom serves as ISDC Chair.”*
 - b. Article 4.2: *“ISDC members, including the Chair, will **serve an initial three years**, with the possibility of renewal up to three additional years without further extension. To the extent possible, membership terms will be staggered to ensure a gradual refreshing of members.”*
6. **The System Council-approved Terms of Reference** of CGIAR’s ISDC¹ includes a provision for the appointment process of the ISDC such that *“ISDC members, including the ISDC Chair, are appointed by the System Council based upon a merit-based, open and competitive selection process”* (Article 4.3).
7. Pursuant to Article 4.3, the elements required for the selection process were implemented with a **broad call for applications and nominations** including a visible element as part of that call.
8. **The advertisement for this appointment process**, issued on 27 January 2021 was featured on CGIAR’s website and social media channels as well as shared via email to both internal and external stakeholder groups., was targeted to bring in 3 new members with additional key competencies and diversity required for the Council’s effective composition, with specific disciplines and skills being particularly sought in 2021 around: innovation systems and/or development; agriculture, ecology and/or ecosystems; and plant breeding. Particular emphasis was placed on seeking candidates whose origin, experiences, and normal work environments are from regions where CGIAR’s work is focused. Applicants from Sub-Saharan Africa, who are women and non-binary persons, and who are early- to mid-career researchers and science-for-development experts were encouraged to apply.
9. From the 26 February 2021 deadline for submissions, the following steps were taken:
 - a. **Collating Submissions**: 168 applications and nominations were received in total which were filed, and a summary sheet developed for the Nominations Panel.
 - b. **Pre-screening**: All submissions were pre-filtered against application/nomination requirements and eligibility criteria. Sorting was undertaken into three categories reflecting candidate suitability against the expertise, competencies and diversity being targeted to support the review by the Panel.

¹ Approved by the System Council with effect from 4 October 2018 (Decision Ref: SC/M6/EDP2); available at: https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarorg/2018/10/TOR-ISDC_Approved_04Oct2018.pdf

- c. Managing potential conflict of interest: Following One CGIAR procedures, all Panel members provided signed declarations on potential conflicts of interest with respect to the process and any applicants/nominees. Any potential conflict of interest was documented and shared with all Panel members, reviewed by Legal Counsel, and mitigation measures put in place (as required).
 - d. Shortlisting: The Panel undertook a process of shortlisting candidates to move forward into the next stage of the process which resulted in candidates being invited for interviews with the Panel (11 for first set of interviews and 2 for second set of interviews). Already at this stage, the Panel considered the commitments to an overall ISDC profile balancing expertise, geography of experience, gender, and stage of career.
 - e. Interviewing: The Panel conducted interviews of the 13 candidates to probe their expertise and experience domains as well as to explore the competencies that they could bring to the ISDC in line with those that were agreed in the Member competency framework. Candidates were asked to deliver a statement in response to a key question provided by the Panel which was followed by a series of prepared questions from the Panel members.
 - f. Reference checking: Written reference statements were requested from all referees. These statements were used as an input by the Panel in its consideration of candidates.
 - g. Analysis: The Panel undertook analysis across all the candidates under consideration along with the current ISDC members to explore what the overall profile of the ISDC would reflect. Panel members were careful to consider the commitment to diversity, geographic representation along with areas of expertise and experience domains that were being targeted.
 - h. Deliberations - the Panel undertook deliberations on April 6 and again on May 6 – analyzing all of the inputs for the candidates as indicated. All Panel members agreed on the three recommendations to the System Council.
10. The Panel conducted the appointment process with careful consideration of the targeted needs for the overall composition of the ISDC as well as in the changing landscape of CGIAR, as reflected in the One CGIAR, and the world overall. Considering this context, the Panel is recommending persons who would bring valuable backgrounds, disciplines, skills and experiences to contribute to addressing key challenges in the One CGIAR Research and Innovation Strategy.