

Meeting Summary  
13<sup>th</sup> System Council Meeting  
9-10 June 2021

Purpose:

This document presents the formal meeting summary for the System Council's 13th meeting, as approved by the Council on a no objection basis with effect from 23 August 2021 (Decision Ref: SC/M13/EDP1)

It supplements the [SC13 Chair's Summary](#) (dated 21 June 2021) that provided formal confirmation of decisions taken and agreed actions.

Distribution notice: This document may be distributed without restriction.

Prepared by: System Council Secretariat  
(System Organization, Board and Council Relations Team)

## Introduction:

This document presents a summary of the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the System Council (“Council”) held on 9 and 10 June 2021 as a virtual meeting.

By way of overview:

- **Format.** The meeting included two days of meetings.
- **Agenda items.** The meeting covered agenda items within the six (6) sessions set out in the table of contents on the following page.
- **Decisions\*\*** The Council took six (6) decisions during its meeting, described in the text.
- **Agreed positions and actions\*\*** The Council agreed on two (2) 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 previously shared in the SC13 Chair’s Summary, issued on 21 June 2021, and available here: [https://storage.googleapis.com/cqiarorg/2021/06/SC13-07\\_Chairs-Summary.pdf](https://storage.googleapis.com/cqiarorg/2021/06/SC13-07_Chairs-Summary.pdf)*

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## Agenda Item 1: Meeting Opening

1. The System Council Chair, Juergen Voegele, opened the meeting. With a welcome to all participants, a quorum was confirmed as present.
2. The Chair's introductory framing for the meeting reflected that SC13 is the third virtual meeting held in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the stark reality that there are profound inequalities in global access to vaccines that require urgent global attention. Pausing to express sincere concern on the news from India on the status of the pandemic, the Chair highlighted the major interconnectedness of the growing inequality in vaccine access and food security, with nearly 300 million people in an unacceptable situation with regards to access to safe, nutritious food, with CGIAR having a key role to play as part of the solution.
3. The Chair welcomed new System Council voting members, alternates and participants<sup>1</sup> including:
  - a. East Asia and Pacific - China: Jianmin Xie
  - b. Sweden: Dr. AnnaKarin Norling
  - c. West Asia and North Africa - Iran: Mohammed Reza Balali
  - d. United States of America: Jim Barnhart
  - e. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Ismahane Elouafi
4. The Chair also welcomed invited guests from Denmark, Ireland, CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council ('ISDC'), and CGIAR's Advisory Services Shared Secretariat.
5. Decision SC/M13/DP1: Meeting Co-Chair  
The System Council **appointed** Jim Barnhart, representative from USAID as the non-voting honorary Co-Chair for the meeting, pursuant to Article 5.2 of the CGIAR System Framework.
6. The Co-Chair expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve in the role and offered some opening reflections. He highlighted the key opportunities presented by operating as One CGIAR, in particular the ability to open up new pathways to meet the challenges of our time including rising levels of hunger and malnutrition, the climate crisis, new digital applications for accelerating research progress – as well as impacts – on the ground.
7. Calling for declarations of interest on the agenda, the Chair recognized that individual members have specific interests in funding decisions for proposals, however noted that the aim during this meeting was to obtain the 'green light' to continue to develop the prospectus of Initiatives based on co-design work that has taken place.
8. No declarations of interest were made.

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<sup>1</sup> The System Council composition is available at <https://www.cgiar.org/how-we-work/governance/system-council/sc-composition/>

9. [Decision SC/M13/DP2: Adoption of the agenda](#)  
The System Council **adopted** the Agenda as issued on 26 May 2021 (document SC13-01).

Agenda Item 2: SPOTLIGHT - Work of the laureate of the 2021 World Food Prize, Dr. Shakuntala Thilsted

10. The Co-Chair framed the session, highlighting the fundamental nature of inclusive development outcomes such as those delivered by the work of Dr. Shakuntala Thilsted, Global Lead for Nutrition and Public Health at WorldFish and 2021 World Food Prize Laureate. He also underscored the critical importance of national research partners in generating research advances and in assuring that the needs of farmers generate the impacts sought, noting the exemplary record of Bangladesh in this regard. He also highlighted the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council's receipt of the 2021 Independence Award from the country's Prime Minister for their contribution to agricultural research and training.
11. The Managing Director, Global Engagement & Innovation – Kundhavi Kadiresan – welcomed Dr. Thilsted and Dr. S.M. Bokhtiar, Executive Chairman of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) as speakers during the session, and highlighted Dr. Thilsted's contribution to improving the quality, quantity, and availability of food through her pioneering scientific work on nutrition, fish, and aquatic food systems.
12. Dr. Thilsted shared highlights of her research throughout her career and the approach taken, underscoring that consumption data, household and individual data, and the nutrient composition of common foods had been the starting point. Reflecting on how her work contributes to CGIAR's mission – to deliver science and innovation that advance the transformation of food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis – Dr. Thilsted emphasized three priorities for research, innovation and scaling, that would truly transform the agenda of CGIAR, from feeding with a focus on quantity, to nourishing which includes quality<sup>2</sup>.
13. Dr. S.M. Bokhtiar shared reflections on the impact of the work of Dr. Thilsted and BARC on the people of Bangladesh, commending Dr. Thilsted's contribution to bringing a paradigm shift in pond polyculture systems and the significant role this has played in poverty reduction. He noted that around 1.17 million people are expected to overcome poverty by 2022, as a result of livelihood improvements related to fisheries and aquaculture value chains, with another 3 million people expected to have improved lives from increased fisheries and agriculture production in the same period. The significant reductions in malnutrition and mortality among children and pregnant women were also emphasized.
14. Members of the System Council offered warm congratulations to Dr. Thilsted, and concluding reflections were shared by the Managing Director, Global Engagement &

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<sup>2</sup> Dr Thilsted's full remarks can be found [at this link](#)

Innovation, the Co-Chair and Chair, who applauded the people-centric and innovative partnerships-based approach taken in Dr Thilsted's work.

### Agenda Item 3: The 2022-2024 Investment Prospectus (formerly Plan)

15. The System Council Chair framed the session, recalling the progress and key milestones since the System Council's November 2019 approval of the System Reference Group recommendations – including the December 2020 approval of the [CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy](#) that provides strategic direction to CGIAR's work. At the previous two Council meetings, strategic guidance was given on the process to develop an investment plan, and an update on its development. With that plan – to be re-titled the '2022-2024 Investment Prospectus' to better clarify what it is (and what it is not) – now tabled for approval, the Chair noted that this represents an exciting moment to set in motion the important work of One CGIAR to deliver on challenges and needed impacts and to bring its best in working collaboratively.
16. The Executive Management Team ('EMT') Convener and Managing Director, Research Delivery and Impact - Claudia Sadoff – set out an overview of the material, highlighting that:
  - a. The 2022-2024 Investment Prospectus is an exciting outline of a truly One CGIAR investment program, co-designed in accordance with the Eschborn principles<sup>3</sup>, and developed by a highly engaged and diverse group of scientists from across CGIAR and beyond;
  - b. Defined as a 'prospectus', it represents a set of CGIAR Initiatives described at the concept stage which are continuing to be refined and developed. Thus, the ask of the System Council is for approval and guidance to continue to evolve the set of Initiatives.
  - c. The Investment Prospectus and a set of Initiatives will be adaptively managed as it takes shape, thus not only taking forward the listed Initiatives to full completion but also encouraging the possibility for consolidating, adding or dropping Initiatives;
  - d. The Council's guidance is sought on ideas that have arisen through discussion, first for support for the 'Prospectus' nomenclature, to more clearly indicate that the set of Initiatives is still evolving and second, that the Council be kept informed through periodic update meetings if and when significant changes are made to the Initiatives.
17. The EMT Convener also provided reflections on important feedback heard from System Council members and other stakeholders thus far, including:
  - a. The need for coherence: which is already being targeted through the design process, through a series of nested theories of change, by commissioning rather than competing the proposal development process, and by empowering the three Science Group Directors to rationalize and refine the Investment Prospectus further, to ensure a fully coherent set of Initiatives. It was emphasized that the intent is that the eventual group of Initiatives be equally

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<sup>3</sup> Internal principles, as agreed during the Eschborn informal Funder-led workshop, February 2020, and set out on page 18 of [meeting document SC11-04a](#)

- prioritized and notionally allocated funding. However, each will be then be finalized, independently assessed, and thereafter confirmed for funding and launched, with the relevant processes ensuring that each funded Initiative meets the rigorous, readiness and quality standards required by CGIAR;
- b. The importance of prioritization: which is being addressed by working with the Science Group Directors to develop clear mechanisms to allocate CGIAR's limited resources across selected Initiatives, following System Council guidance, the advice of the Investment Advisory Groups, and evidence for impact. Prioritization efforts have also included triangulation discussions with the Investment Advisory Groups, using IFPRI's foresighting work, evidence for potential impact provided by the CGIAR Adaptation Atlas<sup>4</sup>, and insights on priorities that can be taken from the Two Degree Initiative as well as consultations with partners and stakeholders; and
  - c. Feedback on funding modalities, and the importance of assurance and rigorous technical and financial reporting: which feedback has been received and will be acted on.
18. Reconfirming the timeline and stage-gating process ahead, the EMT Convener emphasized that the process is on track to launch around two-thirds of the Initiatives by 1 January 2022, and the remainder within the first two quarters of 2022, thus assuring a robust transition into One CGIAR science programming.
19. The System Council also heard from the recently appointed three Global Science Directors, each eminent scientists in their respective fields, who will provide leadership of each of the three Action Areas of the 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy: Dr. Barbara Wells, Global Director of Genetic Innovation; Dr. Johan Swinnen, Global Director of Systems Transformation; and Prof. Dr. Martin Kropff, Global Director of Resilient Agri-Food Systems. Each provided observations on the opportunities presented by the proposed Initiatives in their respective action areas, and the interrelationship between these to deliver on the impact areas.
20. The ISDC Chair shared a video with the System Council, in which members of the ISDC provided thoughts and inputs on key elements that the ISDC views as critical for a CGIAR's future success. He also set out elements that the ISDC had identified from its consideration of the emerging Investment Prospectus that would strengthen the Initiatives as they are developed, including:
- a. That while impact is the reason for research undertaken, the investment Prospectus should clearly focus and articulate the research questions that must be answered in order to deliver these impacts, explicitly matching the existing demand with what CGIAR is able to supply; and
  - b. The importance of scientific staffing as a key part of the investment value proposition, such that the best talent is attracted and retained.
21. The ISDC Chair confirmed the planned process of independent review of the Initiative

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<sup>4</sup> The CGIAR Adaptation Atlas, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (currently in a beta version) was used for prioritization of the regional integrated initiatives (both for sub-regional geographies and for activities).

proposals, acknowledging the need for this to be adaptively managed as the development process moves forward, and confirming that the ISDC stands ready to work with the EMT to ensure a smooth process.

22. The System Board Chair advised that the System Board had, at its 18-19 May 2021 meeting, unanimously approved the Investment Prospectus for further elaboration and consolidation as a prospectus and an articulation of strategic choices for the next three years, developed and designed in cocreation mode. He reflected that it answers the call to deliver a coherent response to the challenges facing the world in the five identified impact areas and could not have been possible without CGIAR coming together as One CGIAR. Notwithstanding the opportunities that still exist to refine and strengthen this, under the guidance of the EMT, the Science Group Directors and the Investment Advisory Groups, he noted that it represents what the world needs and should expect from CGIAR, and that the System Board strongly recommends it to the System Council.
23. During discussions that followed, System Council members expressed unanimous positive support for the '2022-2024 Investment Prospectus' to be taken forward – noting some recommendations and inputs on consolidation as this is developed into the first group of interconnected Initiatives . These included:
  - a. Interest in the regional approach and the way that Funders can target resources regionally in priority areas;
  - b. The importance of focus within the Initiatives and connection between them to deliver the impacts sought;
  - c. A request for clarity on mechanisms to address feedback through the structures in place including the Investment Advisory Groups, Initiative Design Teams, System Council and ISDC;
  - d. A number of interventions relating to strengthening the coherence of the portfolio – will a call to be explicit and transparent on the selection of the first Initiatives to be funded, and to take sufficient time to clarify and develop the interactions between thematic Initiatives and regional activities. It was noted that the majority of the regional Initiatives do not have the same level of maturity as many thematic Initiatives and require in-depth interactions with partners;
  - e. That strategic analyses and Funder preferences should be taken into account as part of the quality assurance mechanism;
  - f. Advice from several Funders to draw out clearly how CGIAR as a science-based organization will use its comparative advantage and core strengths in delivering the intended development impact;
  - g. To ensure that what is developed takes into account lessons learned from the CRP evaluations and recommendations of SPIA in its [“Evaluating a Decade of Investment – Findings and Recommendations from CRP Systematic Synthesis”](#);
  - h. Requests that ISDC provide advice to the System Council on the coherence of the Investment Prospectus as it takes further shape through the development of the CGIAR Initiatives and that the names of ISDC’s expert reviewers be made available at least annually on its website;
  - i. That for Funders to take the required decisions later in the year, clear and realistic budgets linked to activities, outcomes and outputs will be essential and

- justifications for investment;
- j. That regular updates on the Initiatives as they are developed would be highly appreciated with as much detail as possible where needed to enable decisions that align to Funder decision-making cycles;
  - k. That national research partners stand ready to actively participate in the development of Initiatives to ensure that these align with strategic priorities and can enhance future collaboration. A number of interventions called for this to be a priority in the weeks and months ahead to ensure the most relevant set of interconnected Initiatives as possible;
  - l. Appreciation that inputs on the need for prioritization have been recognized, noting that priority is often determined through budget allocations and that a clear overall allocation plan would be required. It was asked how proposals developed later will be balanced within the overall portfolio budget and allocations under such an approach<sup>5</sup>;
  - m. Advice to create a framework for each action area that provides a coherent methodology and eliminates competing approaches, and a coordinated approach to defining priority geographies and working in geographies across Initiatives, as well as between each action area;
  - n. From a number of Funders, an echo of ISDC's call for the theories of change to define the research questions that will lead to the development outcomes sought – to define the comparative advantage of CGIAR as a science-based organization;
  - o. Support for the inclusion of work on vegetables, fruit and nutrition, with a suggestion to consider further the positioning of an Initiative on vegetables to take into account questions of affordability including policies, resilient agri-food areas of production systems and in urban and peri-urban contexts;
  - p. A call for additional information on the analytical framework to ensure that the Initiatives are getting the right scrutiny against appropriate benchmarks, and a recommendation that the quality of leadership, which would likely include top scientific talent currently external to CGIAR, be included in ISDC's review criteria;
  - q. Strongly endorsement of ISDC's reflections on thinking strategically about personnel to ensure CGIAR attracts the best scientists – including leadership of Initiatives from talent not currently in the System – as well as partners strategically with the best science groups to tackle truly global challenges;
  - r. On the importance of gender-focused research - recognition of the inclusion of several Initiatives focusing on gender equality and diversity, and a strong call to ensure that this is integrated in all Initiatives in a manner that ensures a compelling approach across the prospectus as a whole; as well as a request for clarity regarding the future of the Gender Platform as an empowered element of system architecture.
  - s. A reflection that to have positive impact on small farmers and consumers and empower them, regional and local Initiatives driven by solid local partnership should be the backbone of the portfolio with thematic Initiatives coming in

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<sup>5</sup> Post-meeting note: Priority-setting is expected at both Action Area level (i.e. among Initiatives and will also inform budget size) and at Initiative level (i.e. among activities and geographies). Documented justification of the priorities will be provided within the proposals (Initiative level) and the FINPLAN (Action Area level) for the Council's consideration.

- support. It was advised to carefully consider sequencing, given that some thematic Initiatives may be further developed at this time, to ensure that opportunities are not missed;
- t. A reiteration of the need for more intensive and continued stakeholder consultation with governments, private sector and particularly civil society including producer and consumer organizations;
  - u. A call to ensure that key systems including performance management, results management, stage-gating and regional prioritization remain at the forefront of minds as the final Investment Plan is developed;
  - v. A call to ensure that there is appropriate mainstreaming of animal agriculture and aquaculture in food systems, in particular management of animal genetic resources;
  - w. That in the African context, strategic alliances to scale technologies are of key importance, noting also that there are opportunities to strengthen capacity in research and extension institutions in this regard; and
  - x. A call to maintain commitment to a serious end-to-end innovation strategy approach – with strong performance and results management, stage-gating and regional prioritization. It was emphasized that this plays to CGIAR’s core advantage in bridging gaps in implementation, bring advanced science and private sector expertise, and manage scaling pathways and innovation pipelines in a credible and impactful way that reaches end users using metrics of success that feed back into our own understanding of what works.
24. The Chair of the System Board and EMT Convener expressed thanks to the System Council for the clear signals provided within an overall framework of strong support to proceed, acknowledging that endorsement does not indicate approval of all Initiatives at this stage. Responding to questions and inputs discussed during discussion, their remarks included:
- a. A reconfirmation that inputs on leadership diversity, career development and the full funding of the genebanks are fully acknowledged and remain priorities;
  - b. That the Science Group Directors are being empowered to continue ongoing work on prioritization to rationalize the set of Initiatives for coherence, coverage and mindful of the CGIAR’s comparative advantage, as well as to refine Initiatives individually by sharpening the science focus and revisiting the appropriate proposed allocations of funding to avoid a ‘first past the post’ funding scenario;
  - c. That as it works to this, the team will build on evidence on foresighting carried out and from continued and increased consultations with partners and stakeholders in regions and partner organizations;
  - d. That the importance of continuing the end-to-end approach and systems approach has been clearly heard, as has the call for a focus on impact at scale which is sought to be embedded in the Initiatives, in constructs of stage gating and innovation bundles, in theories of change and in the performance management framework; and
  - e. That through deliberations, it was agreed that at this stage of the work being undertaken to design the Initiatives to be funded during 2022-2024, ‘Investment Prospectus’ (rather than ‘Investment Plan’) better defines the evolving nature of the work.

25. [Decision SC/M13/DP3: One CGIAR's 2022-2024 Investment Prospectus](#)

The System Council:

- a. **Approved** the 2022-2024 Investment Prospectus for the 3-year business period, pursuant to Article 6.1 a) iii. of the CGIAR System Framework; and
- b. **Took note** of the process going forward, in which the Investment Prospectus and its set of Initiatives will be adaptively managed by the Executive Management Team, advised by the Investment Advisory Groups that are chaired by the Global Science Group Directors.

26. [Action SC/M13/AP1: Strengthening the development of CGIAR Initiatives](#)

The System Council asked that:

- a. The Executive Management Team **take note of and address** the important inputs provided during SC13 to continue to shape the Investment Prospectus and strengthen the development of the CGIAR Initiatives to be included therein.
- b. The Independent Science for Development Council **provide advice** to the System Council on the coherence of the Investment Prospectus as it takes further shape through the development of the CGIAR Initiatives.
- c. Through System Council mechanisms, **periodic updates** are provided to members on the development of the CGIAR Initiatives and opportunities to engage with the process.

27. Concluding the session, the System Council Chair expressed appreciation to all those who have developed and contributed to thinking to reach the milestone of approval of a strong prospectus, and for the clarity of discussion and the System Council's ability of to move things forward through consensus. He acknowledged the continued discussions required to ensure that the final proposals deliver coherence, prioritization, and balance, including between important issues and urgent ones. Recalling the themes raised in earlier discussions with Dr. Shakuntala Thilsted, he echoed the call for all that CGIAR does to be connected to those it serves.

#### Agenda Item 4: Implementing One CGIAR

28. On the System Council Chair's invitation, the Managing Director, Global Engagement & Innovation recalled the strong affirmation for CGIAR to operate 'as one' heard during the previous session, and the interdependent priorities of a coherent, high-quality research portfolio and pooled funding to deliver on this. Citing the key elements of SRG recommendation 5 of more, and pooled funding, the System Council heard key elements of the strategy to translate the ambition into reality, which include:

- a. Growth opportunities, particularly the importance of pooled funding – including through bringing new funders to the System Council and strengthening global representation in investment;
- b. Focused efforts to seek to build a strong climate finance pipeline as One CGIAR, through facilities such as the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility, as well as new prospective opportunities such as the Bezos Earth Fund;

- c. Leveraging new regional and country operations for International Finance Institution investments; and
  - d. Developing and growing private innovative finance mechanisms, including sustainable finance impact investors.
29. The Managing Director, Global Engagement & Innovation highlighted that stewardship of CGIAR, and the development of the 2022-2024 Investment portfolio would not be possible without the deep engagement and strong commitment of the System Council. It was noted that a key priority is stability during transition to One CGIAR, with the World Bank Trust Fund to be maintained. Funders' inputs on funding modalities for future CGIAR Investments have been welcomed and will continue to be captured and addressed to ensure that these match Funders' needs, and support continued and increased investment.
30. The System Council member for the United Kingdom ('UK') – Alan Tollervey – representing the Funder Champions group<sup>6</sup>, highlighted key messages from previous discussions on the need for a global organization able to target research and development resources to address complex global challenges. Recalling the Preferential Principles for 2022-2024 Investments, it was noted that the Funder Champions Group strongly endorses these, emphasizing that:
- a. The principles provide both flexibility and coherence, but do not enforce a 'one size fits all' approach;
  - b. They enable flexibility around geographical targeting or specifically allocating resources to issues that are high priorities for Funders' respective political leadership; and
  - c. They provide a model that will enable early risk-taking, stage-gated management to impact, and space and time for feedback loops; all essential for effective management of demand-driven research and development.
31. It was noted that the UK's presidency of COP26 (UN Climate Conference) during 2021 is focused on the role of the food system in driving biodiversity loss, land use change and dangerous climate change, and seeking support for global action to address these. To that end, work is in progress with CGIAR teams to elevate the role of agricultural research and development as a key plank in addressing these challenges. Recalling the UK's commitment to CGIAR since its inception, it was affirmed that the UK will prioritize investment into pooled funding, work to elevate CGIAR on the international political stage, and make commitments public at COP26. System Council Funders were called on to double support to One CGIAR where possible, recognizing political constraints that many operate within.
32. The Chair invited reactions from System Council members, which included:
- a. Strong support and endorsement for the messages conveyed by the Funder Champions group and commitments by many around the table to prioritize pooled funding in support of a strong and stable CGIAR;

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<sup>6</sup> A group of System Council Funders working in support of the objectives of more pooled funding – comprised of The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and the World Bank.

- b. Recalling the interconnected nature of the 5 SRG recommendations, it was emphasized that completion of efforts to embed the operational structure, put in place empowered leadership and deliver a strong portfolio will serve to strengthen the case for investment;
  - c. Encouragement for CGIAR to develop new and diversified sources of funding, including as key connections into related global debates and challenges and to ensure increased diversity of Funder voices;
  - d. That some Funders have provided specific funding support to the transition to One CGIAR, and a call for others to consider whether such a contribution could be made to support change management costs;
  - e. Echoing earlier recognition expressed of the important contributions of host countries, both in-kind and financial, it was highlighted that the One CGIAR integrated regional and country approach will enhance programming and engagement with NARS and other key actors at the country level; and
  - f. A proposal that the representatives of regional constituency countries be brought further into the design and development of the One CGIAR regional and country representation approach as it evolves.
33. The Managing Director, Global Engagement & Innovation welcomed the strong support for a pooled funding approach heard and the inputs and recommendations provided, including:
- a. Confirmation of the intent to embed codesign and collaborative processes involving National Agricultural Research Systems and other key players at the country and regional level, as well as universities and researchers, both at the local and global level;
  - b. Highlighting that CGIAR's integrated operational structure, through the regional directors and country managers is designed to provide a clear, transparent consultative process to engage with countries and regions – thus ensuring that the strategy has a demand-side focus, aligning research and innovation to address the priorities at the country and regional level; and
  - c. That the call for urgency in appointing that leadership had been heard, with the majority of regional directors now announced and recruitment underway for the remaining roles – keeping CGIAR's target for 40% of women in senior roles at the forefront of the EMT's mind as that process is undertaken.
34. Thanking Funders for their messages of support around funding and rich inputs on CGIAR'S future research in the previous session, the System Board Chair provided an update on progress to put in place the integrated operational structure. Reiterating the System Board's deep commitment to ensure that all aligned elements of the One CGIAR vision are in place, he highlighted areas where there is a degree of perceived fragility in the process of reform, notably around unified governance and empowerment of the management structure. He asked that the System Council be unequivocal in its message that only full delivery of the SRG recommendations will be acceptable and lead to the growth and impact sought.
35. The Managing Director, Institutional Strategy and Systems – Elwyn Grainger-Jones –

provided a summary of the status of implementation of those SRG recommendations<sup>7</sup>.

36. Acknowledging the strong progress in many areas, he noted:
- a. That there has been good progress in filling key One CGIAR key managerial roles, and that in keeping with CGIAR's commitment to advancing gender equality, diversity, and inclusion ('GDI') in the workplace the EMT is aiming for at least 40% women overall across key managerial positions, from a baseline of around 33%. The process also creates opportunities to advance all other forms of diversity in CGIAR's leadership;
  - b. That over 120 staff are involved in 35 task teams working to deliver elements on the critical path to an early-stage operating model throughout 2021, to launch from 2022;
  - c. The wide-reaching stakeholder communications efforts underway, including monthly newsletters, bimonthly all-staff webinars, surveys, Center townhalls and an 'Agents of Change' network;
  - d. The strong focus on ensuring that One CGIAR management is empowered to deliver on their roles through an appropriate authorizing environment, and that these leaders will become key change managers to continue to take the process forward; and
  - e. Strong appreciation for the Funders who have provided financial support for the transition process, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Norway, Sweden, the European Commission, the UK and Belgium.
37. The Director, Board and Council Relations (and Secretary to the System Council) provided additional context around the related issues of completion of implementation of unified governance and the empowerment of One CGIAR leadership through and appropriate authorizing environment. It was noted that there are instances where the 'checklist' developed by Transition Advisory Group 3 has not been fully adhered to or implemented in a way that brings unanticipated challenges in 'working as one'. It was confirmed that the System Board is undertaking renewed efforts to work through identified issues with Center/Alliance Boards to ensure that these are addressed and do not impede the required decision-making to empower the One CGIAR management structure, and that the System Council's continued support through clear messaging and targeted dialogue where required is highly-valued.
38. In discussions that followed, the following reflections were provided:
- a. That future funding commitments will be explicitly linked to One CGIAR being fully implemented, with one Funder noting that a contribution has already been regrettably redirected from a Center who had decided not to implement unified governance during 2020 in line with their earlier advice to all Centers that full adoption of One CGIAR would be essential to their future funding support;
  - b. Acknowledgement that flexibility is required in governance arrangements where specificities of host countries require it. However, absent external factors it is expected that the checklist be implemented in full;
  - c. That development of the checklist had been undertaken in a spirit of dialogue

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to the summary provided during the plenary meeting, a ['deep-dive' session on the One CGIAR Integrated Operational Structure](#) was held on Friday 11 June.

- and compromise, and it is therefore not expected that there would be the need to further deviate from what was agreed therein; and
- d. An equally strong call from CGIAR's partner country constituencies for moving forward with One CGIAR without delay, and a suggestion made that voices from CGIAR's host countries join the dialogue in instances where there may be challenges to overcome.
39. In response to a question raised around anticipation of issues arising during transition, it was noted that the proactive raising of potential risks during the discussion was intended to maximize the available strategies to ensure that they do not materialize. The highly collaborative approach of the CGIAR Board Chairs' Convener in developing the mitigation strategies was emphasized.
40. Summarizing, the Chair thanked System Council members for their clear and unambiguous calls to maintain the direction, speed and substance of One CGIAR.
41. [Action SC/M13/AP2: Supporting unified governance for One CGIAR](#)  
The System Council asked that they be **kept informed** on any ongoing challenges regarding full adoption of unified governance as one of the 5 interconnected elements of One CGIAR.

### Agenda Item 5: Leveraging what we are learning

42. The Co-Chair framed the session, highlighting the value of drawing on important lessons from CGIAR's work to date as One CGIAR progresses, and the criticality of strong systems to capture such lessons<sup>8</sup>.
43. The Chair of the Standing Panel for Impact Assessments (SPIA) presented key messages on "Learning from Impact Assessments to improve impacts of One CGIAR", reflecting on:
- a. The need to be able to understand how and when it can be known whether the CGIAR Initiatives are contributing to reaching the 5 impact areas, looking beyond projections;
  - b. The need to invest from the start in methods and measurement to understand not only whether something has worked (measuring reach and looking at causal evidence) but also whether it is working (causally testing assumptions underlying the theory of change and building impact assessments into research plans);
  - c. That it is therefore crucial to see impact assessment as part of the science – built into the research initiative design;
  - d. A recommendation to separate the indicators in the Performance and Results Management Framework into indicators of reach, paired with causal evidence on impact on specific SDGs being targeted; and
  - e. The importance of investing in social scientists and partnerships with scaling partners, counselling the use of outside experts for capacity strengthening and independence.

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<sup>8</sup> In addition to the presentations provided during the plenary meeting, a 'deep-dive' session on Evaluating a Decade of Investment was held on Friday 11 June.

44. The Director, CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat provided an overview of CGIAR-wide patterns and lessons and of key recommendations arising from the “Synthesis of Learning from a Decade of CGIAR Research Programs”, highlighting:
- a. Strong progress made in genetic gain, policy change in terms of progressing from outputs to outcomes, and particularly in bolstering CGIAR’s global influence, alongside internal and external constraints such as delivering on and measuring the targeted development outcomes and lessons related to skills for scaling through partnerships or social science capacities – of key interest as targets in the developing CGIAR Initiatives are developed;
  - b. Two selected key motifs of the synthesis; first contextualizing the research effort (particularly country coordination and work inside countries) and second around pro-poor framing;
  - c. That insufficient concentration on design around the needs of resource-poor and the most marginalized groups had hampered the ability to reach the System-Level Outcomes<sup>9</sup>;
  - d. Recommendations relating to each of the three Action Areas of the 2030 Research & Innovation Strategy:
    - i. On system transformation – to tackle the grand challenges, climate change, natural resource management, health and nutrition holistically, rather than separately;
    - ii. On resilient agrifood systems – to invest more in implementation science requiring capacities either in-house or through partnerships; and
    - iii. On genetic innovation – prioritizing investment into seed sector research as well as partners and a deep understanding of seed system policy to reach impact at scale.
  - e. That the Shared Secretariat will support mapping the numerous recommendations in the Synthesis Report to the appropriate landing points in CGIAR including through specific briefs per Action Area and working with the Global Science Directors;
  - f. Recommendations around ways of working including conducting conclusive foresight and priority setting processes to support multiple benefits through different impact pathways; leveraging partnerships including being explicit on co-designing exit strategies with partners; and conducting impact evaluation around expanding use of digital tools; and
  - g. Noting that a revised evaluation policy and multiyear evaluation work plan will be presented to the System Council in its Q4 2021 meeting.
45. Noting constraints in timing, the Co-Chair invited System Council members to review available material on the planned ‘Transfer Marketplace’ and share questions and reflections with the Secretariat team.
46. In discussions that followed, System Council members emphasized:
- a. Strong appreciation for the depth and professionalism of the work of the CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat teams that support objective and impartial evaluation and impact assessment of CGIAR’s research agenda;

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<sup>9</sup> As defined in the [CGIAR Strategy & Results Framework 2016-2030](#)

- b. Concern recent evaluative work includes the statement that evidence from the CRPs is too limited, fragmented or inconsistent to permit conclusive findings – and therefore tell a compelling narrative on what the 2017-2021 CGIAR Research Portfolio has achieved;
  - c. The need for impact to be central to the design of the CGIAR Initiatives to ensure a strong evidence-based narrative grounded in the policy imperatives and needs of partner countries – and for the urgency in establishing responsibilities and appropriate resourcing for impact reporting;
  - d. Support for the call for significant and leading-edge social science capacity including through equitable partnerships – noting that this is essential to deliver on an agenda across the impact areas that essentially seeks to change human behavior;
  - e. That the challenges in telling the story of impact from the CRPs is a compelling argument for why One CGIAR is needed; and
  - f. The opportunity to embed a governance architecture that supports the required performance and impact evaluation and reporting in the final 2022-2024 Investment Prospectus and beyond – and a request that the System Board and EMT set out in the Q4 2021 meeting a clear response to the evaluations recommendations on how this will be put in place.
47. The EMT Convener welcomed the discussion, highlighting that the EMT recognizes the opportunities in this area including:
- a. To align processes and policies to ensure that research ethics and review board processes are consistently, transparently and rigorously applied, and to bring together databases in a more coherent and interoperable way as part of the Performance and Results Management Framework (approved alongside the 2030 Research & Innovation Strategy in December 2020);
  - b. Through the current work of two task teams, who are considering the optimal way to structure, position and empower CGIAR’s performance management and learning systems; and
  - c. Ensuring that through the appropriately mandates team or unit, CGIAR will look across all of CGIAR research, adaptively managing the portfolio for impacts, learning lessons and feeding these back in real time in a more integrated, agile and intentional way than was previously possible<sup>10</sup>.

## Agenda Item 6: Closing Meeting

### *Consent Agenda*

48. The Chair introduced the consent agenda, recalling that these were items to be approved as a package without discussion in the meeting unless requested by a System Council member by Wednesday 2 June 2021. With no such requests received, the following decisions were approved under the consent agenda:

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<sup>10</sup> Post-meeting note: In proposing the design, allocation and implementation of the CGIAR research and innovation portfolio, EMT will draw advice from both the Investment Advisory Groups (providing a System Council oversight function) and the Portfolio Performance Management Team (providing an internal managerial function).

49. [Decision SC/M13/DP4: Assurance Oversight Committee membership extension](#)

The System Council **approved** the extension of the terms of the following members of the System Council's Assurance Oversight Committee until 30 June 2022, unless earlier determined by the System Council:

- Saad Bounjoua
- Maurice Goddard
- Muriel Uzan
- Daniel van Gilst

50. [Decision SC/M13/DP5: Standing Panel on Impact Assessment membership](#)

The System Council:

- a. **Appointed** Dr. Sujata Visaria as SPIA Standing Panel Member for a three-year term with effect 1 July 2021 unless otherwise decided by the System Council.
- b. **Appointed** Dr. Monica Biradavolu as an additional Special Initiative Member for a three-year term with effect 1 July 2021 unless otherwise decided by the System Council.
- c. **Extended** Dr. Karen Macours as current SPIA Chair for the remaining two years of the allowable six years until 30 September 2023

51. [Decision SC/M13/DP6: Independent Science for Development Council appointments](#)

The System Council:

- a. **Appointed** Dr. Fetien Abay Abera as a member of the CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) for a three-year term with effect from 1 July 2021.
- b. **Appointed** Dr. Nompumelelo H. Obokoh as a member of the CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) for a three-year term with effect from 1 July 2021.
- c. **Appointed** Dr. Magali Garcia as a member of the CGIAR's Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC) for a three-year term with effect from 1 July 2021.
- d. **Took 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.

*Other Business*

52. The Chair recognized and expressed deep appreciation on behalf of the System Council for the significant contributions of departing members and representatives as follows:

- a. Tony Cavalieri of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation;
- b. Stephen Potter of Canada; and
- c. Michel Bernhardt of Germany.

53. In closing, the Chair thanked the System Council for its open and thoughtful deliberations and inputs that will strengthen the evolving 2022-2024 Investment Prospectus, its clear messaging around the need to complete CGIAR's internal reforms,

and its strong positive signaling around future funding. Acknowledging the task ahead in 2021 to deliver One CGIAR as envisaged, the Chair expressed appreciation for the System Council's continued trust in and support to the process.

54. The meeting was closed.

## Appendix 2 - Participants

**Chair:** Juergen Voegele, Vice President for Sustainable Development, World Bank

**Co-Chair:** Jim Barnhart, Assistant to the Administrator-Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, USAID in an honorary capacity

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

### Members and Alternates

Constituency/Country	Name	Role
African Development Bank	Jonas Chianu**	Designated attendee
Australia	Andrew Campbell	Member
	Julianne Biddle	Alternate
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Tony Cavalieri	Member
	Renee Lafitte	Alternate
Canada	Stephen Potter	Member
	Christophe Kadji	Alternate (designated)
East Asia and Pacific	Hao Weiping	Member (China)
European Commission	Christophe Larose	Member
Germany & Belgium	Sebastian Lesch	Member (Germany)
	Carol Durieux	Alternate (Belgium)
Japan	Naoko Takasugi	Member
	Fumiaki Sato	Alternate
Latin America and Caribbean	Maria Isabel Remy Simatovic	Member (Peru)
	Pedro Machado	Alternate (Brazil)
Mexico	Adriana Herrera-Moreno	Member
	Bernardo Orozco**	Designated attendee (Day 1 only)
The Netherlands	Wijnand van Ijssel	Member
Norway	Even Stormoen	Member
	Daniel van Gilst	Alternate
South Asia	Trilochan Mohapatra	Member (India)
	Shaikh Mohammad Bokhtiar	Alternate (Bangladesh) (Day 1 only)
	Mian Sayeed Hassan**	Designated attendee Bangladesh (Day 2 only)
Sub-Saharan Africa	Garba Sharubutu	Member (Nigeria) (Day 1 only)
Sweden	AnnaKarin Norling	Member
Switzerland	Michel Evéquoz	Member
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Alan Tollervey	Member
United States of America	Eric Witte*	Alternate
West Asia & North Africa	Nevzat Birişik	Member (Turkey)
	Mohammad Reza Balali	Alternate (Iran)
World Bank	Mark Cackler	Member
	Michael Morris	Alternate

### Apologies

Constituency/Country	Name	Role
East Asia and Pacific	Djati Wicaksono	Alternate (Indonesia)
Sub-Saharan Africa	Eliud Kireger	Alternate (Kenya)
United States of America	Rob Bertram	Member

**Non-voting Ex-Officio Members**

Organization/Role	Name
CGIAR System Board, Chair	Marco Ferroni
Center/Alliance Representative 1: Chairs of Center Boards of Trustees	Nicole Birrell
Center/Alliance Representative 2: Center Directors General	Jean Balié
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Ismahane Elouafi (Member) Day 1 only
	Selvaraju Ramasamy (Alternate)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	Malu Ndavi (Alternate)

**Active Observers**

Organization/Role	Name
Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR)	Matthew Montavon**
CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)	Holger Meinke (Chair)

**Invited Guests**

Organization/Role	Name
One CGIAR Executive Management Team	Claudia Sadoff
	Kundhavi Kadiresan
	Elwyn Grainger-Jones ( <i>ex-officio non-voting member in capacity as Executive Director, CGIAR System Organization</i> )
Trustee of the CGIAR Trust Fund (the World Bank)	Jane Mwebi <i>Additional guests: Chalida Chararnsuk; Jorge Lanza; Lewam Nerayo</i>
France, Chair of CRAI (Commission de la Recherche Agricole Internationale)	Bernard Hubert
France: Ministry of Higher Education, Research & Innovation	Frederic Lapeyrie
CGIAR System Council's Assurance Oversight Committee (AOC), Chair	Saad Bounjoua
CGIAR Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA), Chair	Karen Macours

**SC Secretary**

Karmen Bennett, Director, Board and Council Relations, CGIAR System Organization
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**Additional Constituency/Country Delegates**

Constituency/Country	Name	Role
Canada	Santiago Alba Corral	Additional delegate, Day 1 only
East Asia and Pacific	Jinjin Zhu	Additional delegate (China)
	Wenbo Liu	Additional delegate (China)
	Yuankai Jia	Additional delegate (China)
	Zhang Yahui	Additional delegate (China), Day 2 only
Germany & Belgium	Michel Bernhardt	Additional delegate (Germany)
	René Franke	Additional delegate (Germany)
	Sarah Schmidt	Additional delegate (Germany)
	Stefan Kachelriess-Matthess	Additional delegate (Germany)

## Meeting Summary: 13<sup>th</sup> System Council Meeting

Constituency/Country	Name	Role
Japan	Masa Iwanaga	Additional delegate
	Hiroshi Honjo	Additional delegate, Day 1 only
	Shintaro Kobayashi	Additional delegate
	Miyuki Iiyama	Additional delegate
Latin American and Caribbean	Alberto Maurer	Additional delegate (Peru)
	Carlos De los Ríos	Additional delegate (Peru)
	Juan Carlos Guerrero Abad	Additional delegate (Peru)
	Noemi Marmanillo Bustamante	Additional delegate (Peru)
	Roberto Soldevilla Garcia	Additional delegate (Peru)
	Renee Janette Pacheco Santos	Additional delegate (Peru)
South Asia	Mustafizur Rahman	Additional delegate (Bangladesh)
Sweden	Philip Chiverton	Additional delegate
West Asia and North Africa	Hassan Momeni	Additional delegate (Iran)
	Merve Altan	Additional delegate (Turkey)

### Additional Invited Guests

Organization	Name
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark	Mike Speirs
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland	Chris Somerville
CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)	Lesley Torrance
	Nighisty Ghezae
One CGIAR Science Group Directors (agenda item 3 only)	Barbara Wells; Jo Swinnen; Martin Kropff

### Technical resource/operational support

Organization	Name/Role
World Bank	Jonathan Wadsworth, Lead Climate Change Specialist
CGIAR Advisory Services Shared Secretariat	Allison Grove Smith, Director
	Amy Beaudreault, ISDC Senior Manager (Day 1)
	Ricardo Labarta, SPIA Senior Manager (Day 2)
	Svetlana Negroustoueva, Evaluation Senior Manager (Day 2)
CGIAR System Organization (Technical inputs for sessions; meeting management; logistics support)	André Zandstra, Director, Funder and External Engagement
	Elise Perset, Director, Legal and Office Services
	Sonja Vermeulen, Director, Programs
	Michael Gerba, Co-Coordinator, One CGIAR Business Operations & Finance
	Madina Bazarova, Head, CGIAR System Internal Audit Function
	Christine Larson-Luhila, Deputy Director, Board and Council Relations
	Kristina Röing de Nowina, Deputy Director, Funder and External Engagement
	Ekaterina Krivonos, Deputy Director, Programs (Day 1)
	Roland Sundstrom, Senior Advisor, EMT
	Yorgos Solomos, Senior Advisor, Risk Management
	Nadia Manning-Thomas, Board and Council Relations Manager
	Olwen Cussen, Board and Council Relations Officer
	Victoria Pezzi, Meetings and Events Coordinator
	Krishna Ravinthiren, Board and Council Relations Associate