



The High-Level Consultative Forum on Strengthening Africa's Agricultural Research and Innovation in the Context of the One CGIAR Reforms

- A Communiqué

Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire, 19 May 2022

Abidjan II Key Principles and Commitments

Preamble

Africa has the fastest population growth of any region but the lowest agricultural productivity, with climate change threatening to erode gains achieved in recent decades. The work of Africa-based CGIAR Centers is critical for achieving food security on the continent in the same way CGIAR was central to efforts to achieve accelerated agricultural growth and food security in Southeast Asia and Latin America. During the last five decades, CGIAR delivered many game-changing crop, livestock, and aquaculture technologies on the African continent. It is also widely acknowledged that Africa's human capital in agriculture has received a tremendous boost from training programs of the CGIAR system. These investments in human capital have yielded a cadre of trained scientists who have played leadership roles in agricultural productivity, economic and environmental gains.

More recently, CGIAR has become a major vehicle in getting technologies to farmers at scale through the African Development Bank's Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT). Based on Commodity Compacts that connect research and development of CGIAR with farmers, seed companies, agricultural value chains, seed system policy support, and crop campaigns that bulk certified seeds of climate adapted varieties for delivery to farmers, TAAT has delivered climate smart seeds to 12 million farmers in 27 countries in just three years.

The One CGIAR reform process, which commenced in August 2020, was partly born out of a recognition that the over 30 million smallholder farmers of Africa require new technologies, systems, institutions, and policies for advancing their agriculture, and that the evolving, interconnected global challenges facing food systems require a unified and integrated systems response.

But as CGIAR does its reforms, it needs to bear in mind that the focus in Africa for the short term is not more technologies but on getting technologies out to farmers at the scale of tens of millions of farmers. The One CGIAR reforms in Africa should explicitly build around TAAT, to take results to even greater scales, and put in place a system for accountability for delivering technologies to millions of farmers, using results-based financing.

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Secondly, experience in Africa shows clearly that siloed project-based approaches failed. Africa-based CGIAR centers are required for successful development and dissemination of technologies. CGIAR reforms should therefore take an institutional approach based on strong, fully empowered, on-the-ground centers led by Directors General, as directed by their Boards. We need very strong CGIAR centers in Africa, with Directors General that can make decisions independently while leveraging the benefits of One CGIAR authorized by and reporting to an empowered and efficient board, and accountable for driving agreed results at scale for farmers.

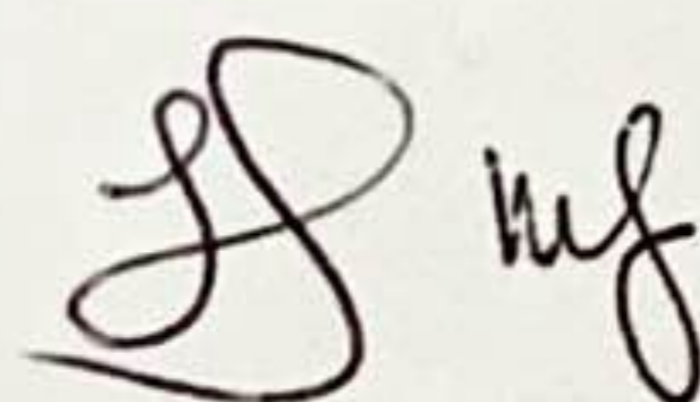
The CGIAR reform should have plans to institutionally strengthen national and regional agricultural research centers, such as the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and the sub-regional agricultural research organizations. CGIAR cannot succeed in taking technologies to scale in Africa unless it creates an institutional framework for strengthening national agricultural research systems, to support the dissemination and uptake of new technologies to the thousands of micro-ecologies on the continent.

Africa is in a race against time on food security, especially in the face of climate change. The global benchmarks for food, nutrition and environmental security are at risk and dependent on what Africa does next. Factors determining success or failure include policy orientations, the quantum of science across the continent, engagement of the private and public stakeholders, and efforts to take technologies to the farmers at scale. CGIAR, as the world's largest public agricultural research network, must continue to play a strong role in the delivery of critical science and innovation to equip and enable farmers to feed themselves and the world.

Abidjan II Commitments

The Abidjan II Commitments constitute a set of *seven principles* and core values, mutually agreed upon following the high-level consultative forum on strengthening African agricultural research and innovation in the context of the One CGIAR reforms. This event (Abidjan II meetings) was hosted by the African Development Bank (AfDB) on 19 May 2022 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, and was co-organized by the African Union Commission (AUC), the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and CGIAR. It was preceded by technical meetings on 18 May 2022, the Abidjan I meeting held on 31 March 2022, and several consultative sessions held between both Abidjan meetings. The preceding discussions were characterized by frank dialogues, mutual understanding, and cooperation, which tone continued into the Abidjan meetings held in March and May.

Participants of the Abidjan II meeting, which was addressed by the President of the African Development Bank, Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina, included the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the AUC, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), CGIAR, FARA, the sub-regional agricultural research organizations (ASARECA, CCARDESA, CORAF, NAASRO), the Africa Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and Akademiya2063.



Participants acknowledged the challenging external environment Africa faces, which is characterized by increasingly complex and interconnected, systemic threats to its food security, including climate change, COVID-19 pandemic, globalization, and the impact of the Russian-Ukraine conflict.

In the context of a looming food crisis, the continent must urgently transform its food, land, and water systems by equipping its farmers with the science and technologies they need to thrive.

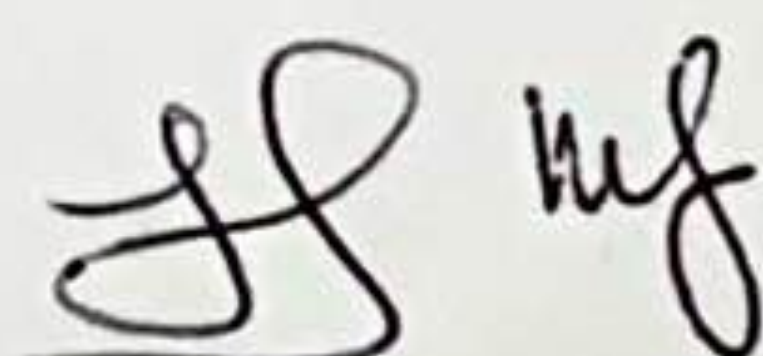
The Abidjan II meetings noted that there is convergence on the premise that the CGIAR reforms offer a unique opportunity to honor and continue the legacy of One CGIAR Centers operating in Africa - building on over 50 years of country and regional cooperation, deepening partnerships, and expanding linkages among the research and innovation systems at national, sub-regional and international levels. At the same time, the transformational change on the scale needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) Malabo Commitments can only be delivered by getting technologies out to farmers at the scale of millions of farmers, via very strong CGIAR centers in Africa that are accountable for driving agreed results and in partnership with strong national agricultural research centers and regional research organizations. Thus, the CGIAR reforms can be a springboard to strengthening Africa's agriculture research and innovation system. The meetings affirmed that the One CGIAR reforms can only be a success if they are a success for Africa.

These dialogues, conducted in a frank and open manner, have helped to chart a clear path towards the development of an institutional framework for collaboration and closer engagement between CGIAR, African governments, National Agriculture Research Systems, FARA and Subregional Research Organizations (SROs). Through research, innovation and strong partnership, the African institutions and CGIAR have sufficiently demonstrated commitment to achieving a resilient and food secure Africa.

Consequently, key proponents of this Communiqué - the President of the African Development Bank; the Commissioner for African Union's Commission's Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment; the Ministers of Agriculture of Cote D'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal, and Chairpersons of the CGIAR System Board and FARA - during the Abidjan II meeting provided guidance aimed at ensuring that the One CGIAR reforms are in the best interests of African farmers and food systems.

Through continuous engagement and adaptive management, in conjunction with African institutions, the One CGIAR transition must ensure that the needs of its African partners are considered and reflected. It will further ensure that strong One CGIAR Centers are maintained, whereby they continue to play their proper role in helping to enable Africa to feed itself and to build food security.

The present Communiqué is proposed to ensure clarity on the shared commitments between CGIAR, the host governments, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, and the Africa's agriculture research and innovation institutions convened by FARA. These entities support the following principles and core values:



1. **CGIAR herewith unequivocally affirms that CGIAR Centers are the essential building blocks of One CGIAR and that the reforms will build on rather than diminish the delivery capacity of the Centers.** Therefore, all One CGIAR Centers - including AfricaRice, ICARDA, IITA, and ILRI - will retain their own governance mechanisms while leveraging the benefits of the One CGIAR transition. The reforms should be based on an institutional approach not a programmatic approach. Going forward, these Africa-based CGIAR centers will maintain host-country agreements and the spirit of strategic partnership that have given the CGIAR wide political support in Africa.
2. **The roles and composition of the respective One CGIAR Center Boards will be composed as set out in their governing documents.** The autonomy of Center Boards and their rights to determine their governance instruments will continue to be at the full discretion of the Center Board in accordance with those governing instruments, and the agreement with the headquarter host country government. It is fully accepted that an important focus of the reforms should be to respect the role of CGIAR Directors General and the Center Board decision-making structures of Africa-based CGIAR centers. The reforms should focus on and strengthen operational decentralization of CGIAR, not a centralization of CGIAR managed by a select few based out of Africa.
3. **The focus in Africa should be on getting technologies out to farmers, at the scale of millions of farmers.** The One CGIAR reforms in Africa should explicitly build around TAAT, to take results to farmers at scale and put in place a system for accountability for delivering technologies to millions of farmers, using results-based financing. The reforms should ensure that CGIAR and National Agricultural Research Systems partners are held fully accountable for impacts in getting technologies to millions of farmers.
4. Consistent with the African continental architecture and geopolitical policies of one united and integrated Africa, the One CGIAR reforms will respect the position of the continent and eschew the concept of a 'sub-Saharan Africa'. CGIAR, in the context of an evolving leadership structure, will **institute and ensure a mechanism for effectively representing Africa's priorities and research delivery.** It will **review the role and participation of the global South in its governance structures**, including representation on the [CGIAR System Council](#) and at CGIAR Centers headquartered on the African continent.
5. CGIAR must **create an institutional framework that supports and strengthens national and supra-national agricultural research organizations.** The reforms should incorporate and strengthen partnership and ownership with the national and regional agricultural research centers, and specifically strengthen national and regional agricultural research institutions, such as FARA and the sub-regional research organizations.
6. To this end, CGIAR will formalize its engagement with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme ex-pillar 4 (CAADP-XP4) organizations i.e., FARA, AFAAS, ASARECA, CCARDESA and CORAF, and other CAADP-associated initiatives. **CGIAR will also include fresh engagement modalities and greater alignment on institutional structure, funding, strategy, and capacity, among other elements:**

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- a. *Institutional structure:* **CGIAR will align, through formalized engagement, with the established continental and sub-regional agricultural research and development coordinating structures**, specifically with FARA as the apex agricultural research coordinating institution and the technical arm of the AUC on research and technology generation, the sub-regional research organizations (ASARECA, CCARDESA, CORAF and NAASRO), agriculture extension organizations (AFMS) and AUDA as the development organization of the African Union. CGIAR shall update its MoU with the AUC.
 - b. *Funding:* The African organizations and CGIAR will work collaboratively to advocate for **increased investment in African agricultural research and innovation systems**, recognizing that CGIAR can play an essential role in facilitating funding to support national systems. CGIAR should work with the African Development Bank to seek institutional support for African-based CGIAR Centers, NARS, FARA and SROs, so they can take their proper role in helping to drive zero hunger in Africa.
 - c. *Strategy:* CGIAR re-affirms its commitment to working with African organizations to ensure **close alignment between CGIAR's strategy and the continent's priorities and frameworks for the development of agriculture, notably CAADP and the S3A**. Complementary instruments and programmes, such as the African Development Bank's Feed Africa Strategy, the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) programme and the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone (SAPZ) initiative; the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Common Africa AgroParks (CAAPs) programme, the CAADP XP4 programme and FAO's science strategy for Africa will be embraced in defining research and innovation priorities and linkages to the relevant CGIAR structures.
 - d. *Capacity:* CGIAR and the African institutions will **work together to strengthen human and institutional capacities of Africa's agricultural research and innovation system** and leverage CGIAR global networks to foster greater South-South and triangular cooperation. This will include but not be limited to the development of a mechanism to mobilize targeted resources for national agricultural research institutions, and learning.
7. Regarding CGIAR's efforts to deepen engagement with country, regional and continental partners, it is agreed that **Africa must have its own representatives** accountable to its constituencies to ensure that the voice of Africa is heard. The current effort on the formation of a [high-level independent advisory panel](#) that will review current approaches and oversee implementation of an engagement consultation plan and the roll-out of the [CGIAR Engagement Framework for Partnerships & Advocacy - Toward Greater Impact](#) will take this concern seriously.

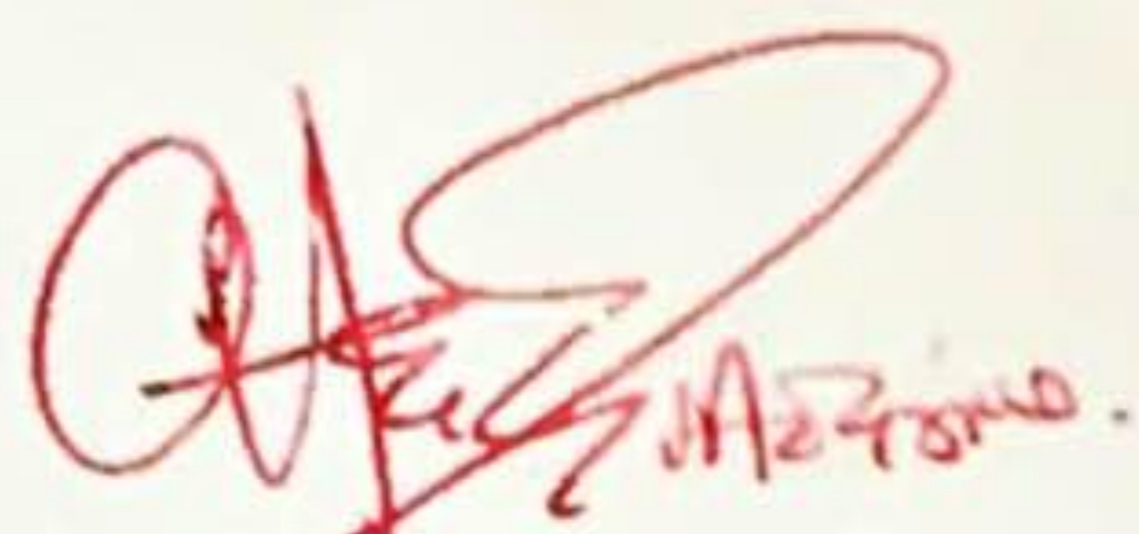
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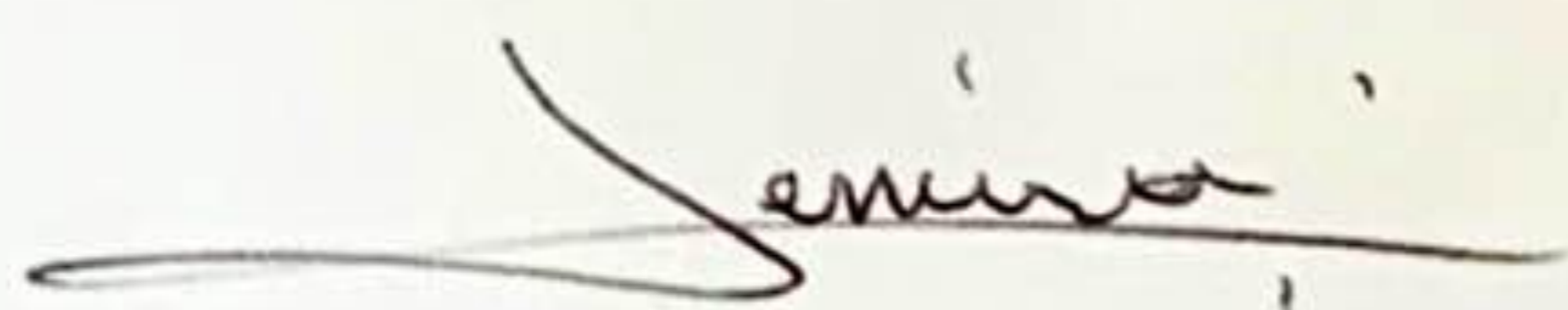
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Within three months of the endorsement of this Communiqué, a plan of action to operationalize these commitments shall be prepared for agreement by CGIAR and the African institutions.

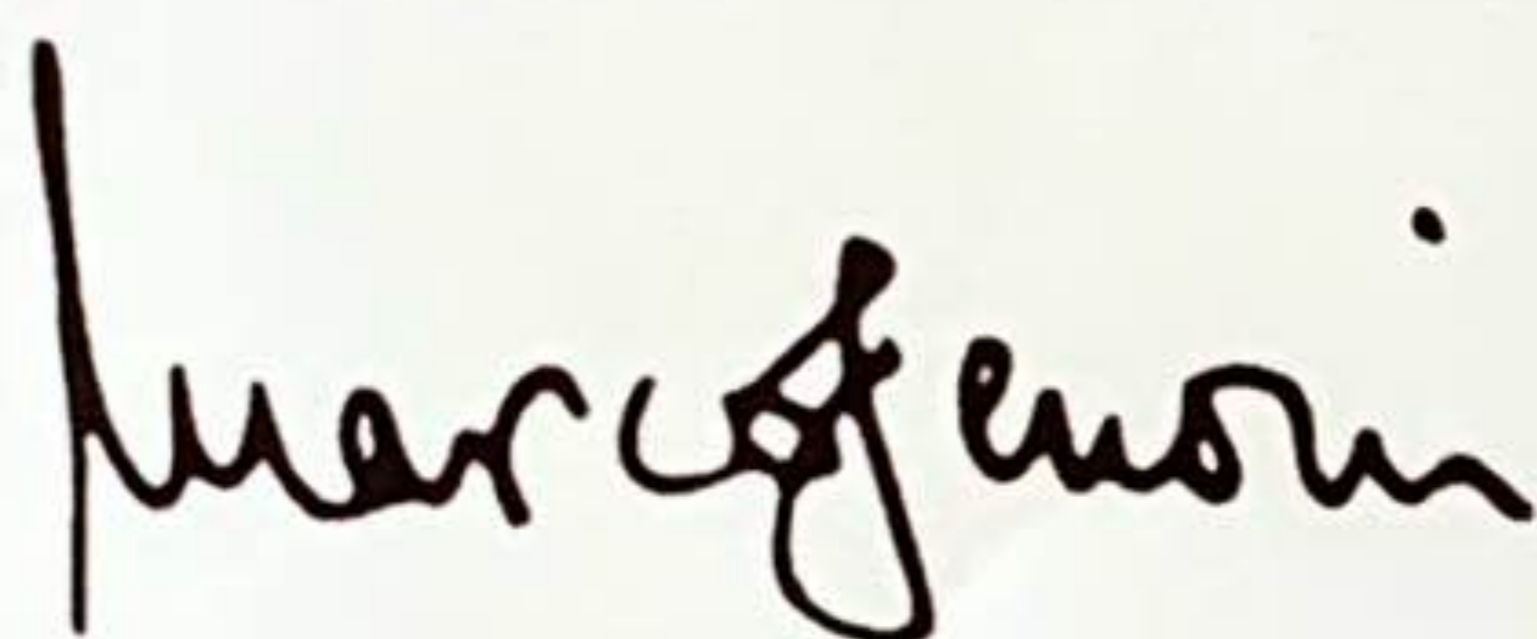
Endorsed with effect from 1 August 2022



Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank



H.E. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Commissioner, Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment, African Union Commission



Marco Ferroni, Chair of the CGIAR System Board



Alioune Fall, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa