

Meeting Summary
System Council ad hoc meeting
Virtual, 20 December 2023

Purpose:

This document presents the summary of an ad hoc System Council meeting held on 20 December 2023, including decisions taken and agreed actions from the meeting. It was approved by the System Council on a no objection basis with effect from Thursday 18 January 2024 (Decision Reference SC/M19/EDP4).

Basis of preparation: Pursuant to Article 9.2(a) of the [System Council Rules of Procedure](#), the Secretariat shall not produce a verbatim record of proceedings. The following document therefore neither attributes interventions, nor reproduces direct quotes of an individual System Council member, Active Observer, or other invited guest.

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Prepared by: System Council Secretariat

Agenda Item 1: Meeting Opening

1. The meeting was opened by the System Council ('Council') Chair, who welcomed members¹, active observers, and guests. A quorum was present.
2. The Chair extended a welcome to Dr. Ismahane Elouafi, attending for the first time in her capacity as CGIAR's Executive Managing Director ('EMD'). The EMD shared some highlights from her first month in the role and exciting areas of potential for the coming year and beyond.

Decision SC19X-DP1: Adoption of the agenda

The System Council adopted the Agenda, as issued on 12 December 2023.

Agenda Item 2: Decision-making on the outcomes of the Unified Governance Review

3. The Chair recalled previous updates provided to the System Council in its 18th and 19th meetings in May and November of 2023, and highlighted the ambitious timeline under which the Ad Hoc Committee on Governance has worked to deliver an outcome for decision, in the form of the *CGIAR Memorandum on the implementation of governance recommendations* (meeting document 1).
4. This Chair noted that the System Council is asked at this time to endorse the Memorandum and approve the package of proposals set out therein – and commit to working in good faith to take required decisions to achieve the Integrated Partnership by the dates set out in the Memorandum. He acknowledged the thoughtful advice of the Council's Assurance Oversight Committee in support of the Council's decision-making, including areas that the Council should prioritize as implementation is taken forward.
5. The Chair invited Dr. Kanayo F. Nwanze, Co-Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Governance, to provide an overview of the process and the recommendations. Dr. Nwanze recalled the highly consultative process followed since work commenced in Q2 2023, which included a multistakeholder webinar, in-person workshop and a series of working sessions. He reflected that the package of proposals defines an integrated partnership – with appropriate mutual accountabilities – with an integrated governance structure to facilitate delivery and oversight of CGIAR's Research and Innovation Strategy.
6. Dr. Nwanze confirmed that, at the date of the meeting, all Center Boards and the System Board (with the exception of one Center) had met to consider the Memorandum and had approved it without conditions (with the final Center due to meet the following day). He noted that decision-making on the Memorandum represents a commitment to work in good faith to implement the proposals therein,

¹ Composition : <https://www.cgiar.org/how-we-work/governance/system-council/sc-composition/>

and that the IFA² Parties are now working to devise a structured process for implementation.

7. The Chair expressed appreciation to the Ad Hoc Committee on Governance for its significant commitment in a short timeframe to deliver a pragmatic outcome in a highly consultative way. He invited reflections from the Council, including on priority areas for the System Board and Centers to focus on during implementation.
8. In their interventions, System Council members were unanimous in their endorsement of the package of proposals in the Memorandum, and in their commendation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Governance for its stewardship of a constructive, collaborative and inclusive process to deliver an outcome and decision-making by the end of 2023.
9. Several System Council members called for additional detail to be provided around the intended role and responsibilities of the General Assembly of Centers, and its specific accountabilities in relation to the Integrated Partnership Board and the System Council. In particular, clarity was sought on its responsibilities relating to governance as well as being a forum for cross-Center interaction. **(See action point SC19X-AP1)**
10. Appreciation was expressed for the AOC's advice, with System Council members echoing:
 - a. The need for flexibility in implementation to address challenges that are likely to arise as details are fleshed out;
 - b. The AOC's recommendation that an implementation plan setting out costing, sequencing, prioritization and risks be prepared by management, and regular updates on this be provided **(See action point SC19X-AP2)**; and
 - c. The importance of providing clarity on with and to whom accountabilities lie for key areas including where these are delivered through common policies.
11. There was support expressed for the larger Integrated Partnership Board to enable it and its members to effectively deliver on their roles, and for the establishment of the standing Nominations Committee. Other interventions by Council members noted other areas for prioritization in the implementation plan early next year, including partnership engagement and determination of the functions that should be integrated, coordinated or independent.
12. The Chair thanked Council members for their strong messages of support and valuable inputs to guide implementation. He summarized the conclusions of discussion as set out in the decision and action points below.

² [CGIAR Integration Framework Agreement](#)

Decision SC19X-DP2 – CGIAR memorandum on the implementation of governance recommendations

Whereas:

- The CGIAR Integration Framework Agreement (as fully executed between all Parties on 21 February 2023) provided, in Article V, 5, that an independent review of the unified governance arrangements will be carried out in 2023; and
- The outcomes of that independent external review, overseen by the Ad Hoc Committee on Governance, have been translated through a consultative process into a set of proposals by a Drafting Working Group drawn from across the IFA Parties and the System Council – in the form of the “CGIAR memorandum on the implementation of governance recommendations”;

Now therefore, the System Council:

- Endorsed the “CGIAR memorandum on the implementation of governance recommendations”;
- Approved the package of proposals set out therein; and
- Committed to working in good faith to take required decisions to achieve the Integrated Partnership by the dates set out in the memorandum.

Action SC19X-AP1 – Clarification of roles and responsibilities

Given the strong views of several Council members regarding the implied role in Governance of the General Assembly of Centers (as mentioned at point 9 above) the System Council requested that additional clarity be provided by 31 January 2024 on the precise role and responsibilities of the General Assembly of Centers, in order to proceed with enactment of the CGIAR memorandum on the implementation of governance recommendations in 2024.

Action SC19X-AP2 – Implementation planning and delivery

The System Council requested that a costed implementation plan be shared alongside the revised 2024 Window 1 budget in Q1 2024, and that regular updates on implementation progress and associated costs be provided to the System Council.

Agenda Item 3: Other Business and Meeting Close

11. The Chair thanked participants and closed the meeting.

Annex 1: Participant List

Meeting Leadership		Key: (**) indicates that voting member/active observer is being represented at the meeting by the alternate (***) indicates that voting member/active observer is being represented at the meeting by another delegated representative	
Chair: Juergen Voegele			
System Council Voting Members (listed alphabetically)	Member representative	Member Alternates & Other Delegation Members	
Australia	Wendy Umberger		
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Ruben Echeverria	Alternate: Renee Lafitte	
Canada	Flora Mak*	Other delegate: François Cloutier	
Denmark	Hanne Carus		
East Asia & Pacific	Yanzhou Qi (China)**	Other delegate: Rui Gu (China)	
European Commission	Christophe Larose		
Germany & Belgium	Carol Durieux (Belgium)*	Other delegates: Sarah Schmidt, Stefan Kachelriess (Germany)	
Ireland	Patrick McManus	Other delegate: Isabella Rae	
Japan	Akiko Tejima	Alternate: Kosuke Minakuchi Other delegates: Masa Iwanaga, Satoru Muranaka, Yuko Watanabe	
Latin America and Caribbean	Jorge Mario Diaz Luengas (Colombia)	Other delegate: Lourdes Sofia Janampa Herrera (Peru)	
Mexico	Adriana Herrera-Moreno		
The Netherlands	Timmo Gaasbeek		
Sub-Saharan Africa	Alternate: Eliud Kireger (Kenya)*	Other delegate: Carolyn Minayo (Kenya)	
Sweden	AnnaKarin Norling	Alternate: Madeleine Jönsson	
Switzerland	Manfred Kaufmann		
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Alan Tollervey		
United States of America	Rob Bertram	Alternate: Jerry Glover Other delegate: Gary Jahn	
West Asia & North Africa	Didem Kökden (Türkiye)**		
The World Bank	Martien Van Nieuwkoop		

Non-voting Ex-officio members	Member	Alternate/Other Delegates
CGIAR System Board	Lindiwe Majele Sibanda (Chair)	
CGIAR Executive Managing Director (in capacity as Executive Director of the System Organization)	Ismahane Elouafi	
Center/Alliance Representative 1: Convener of the Chairs of Center Boards of Trustees	Elsa Murano	
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Selvaraju Ramasamy*	

Active Observers	Representative	Alternate & Other Delegates
CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)	Holger Meinke (Chair)	

SC Secretary
Sylvia Oyinlola, Global Head, CGIAR System Council Support

Invited Guests	Representative
Trustee of the CGIAR Trust Fund (World Bank)	Jane Mwebi
CGIAR System Council's Assurance Oversight Committee (AOC)	Muriel Uzan (Chair)
France	Bernard Hubert

Additional invited guests to this meeting	
Co-Chair, Ad Hoc Committee on Governance	Kanayo F. Nwanze
CGIAR System Council's Assurance Oversight Committee (AOC)	Rita O'Sullivan, Fayezul Choudhury
SB Chair Advisor	Myra Wopereis
Secretary of EIARD (European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development)	Nienke Bientema

Additional participants (speakers/resources/support)	Name/Role
SC Chair advisor	Jonathan Wadsworth, Lead Agriculture Specialist, Agriculture and Food Global Practice, World Bank
CGIAR staff	Ismahane Elouafi, CGIAR Executive Managing Director
	Roland Sundstrom, Chief of Staff, EMD Office
	Rutger de Witt Wijnen, Managing Director, Institutional Strategy and Systems (a.i.) and CGIAR General Counsel
	Andre Zandstra, Global Director of Innovative Finance and Resource Mobilization
CGIAR System Council Secretariat	Emma Quilligan, Senior Manager, System Council Support
	Olwen Cussen, Governance Officer
CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES)	Allison Grove Smith, Director
Event support	
Victoria Pezzi, Meeting and Events Coordinator, CGIAR	