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Director General's Comment

The changing role of international research

Effective research for development requires new partnerships that take into account the changing strengths of research and extension organizations in developing countries and international research centers such as the Future Harvest Centers supported by the CGIAR. On the one hand, developed-country research institutes have access to a wealth of knowledge and technologies in advanced research areas such as functional genomics, or global water cycle change modeling. Research in some of these areas requires major investments and large consortia and consequently, the increased scale of research projects.

On the other hand, the growing number of highly trained scientists in many parts of the developing world and major research systems in some large developing countries have considerably increased the potential of many-but not all-developing countries to carry out high-quality research independently. The relevant research systems in large countries in the South now have larger budgets and larger numbers of capable scientists than the complete CGIAR system put together.

In this changing world, the role of the Future Harvest Centers changes from international research organizations that initiate and have primary responsibility for doing research in the developing world, to organizations that derive their added value primarily from brokering and facilitating international research networks. The international research centers link developed and developing country research institutes in complex multidisciplinary research programs with a strong focus on poverty alleviation and capacity building. This brokering role requires strategically drawing on the strengths of partners while still maintaining the capacity for world-class research within the system of international centers. The Future Harvest Centers should adapt themselves to playing different roles depending on the needs of our national partners: from (1) providing a two-way international window on the world for large, high-capacity countries such as Brazil, India or China, to (2) playing a major role in building capacity for research in countries with severely restricted internal capacities.

IWMI sees the proposal for a Water and Food Challenge Program not only as a means to significant increases in water productivity in agriculture-but also as a means to reorganize the

way IWMI does business-maximizing the impact of our work through strategic multi-organization partnerships.

Impact on high-level water policy

Water is rising rapidly on the international agenda and IWMI has been playing a role at various levels. IWMI has provided support and Secretariat functions for the African Water Task Force that is preparing for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in August. Together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Ghana's Water Resources Commission, IWMI organized a ministerial level conference in Accra, Ghana, opened by the President of Ghana and attended by seven African Ministers, as well as 'by over 200 delegates from over 40 African countries. Together with the United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Asian Development Bank, IWMI organized a Ministerial Round Table Dialogue in which ten Asian countries discussed water management issues and developed a joint statement on water management priorities. Finally, IWMI is the implementing agency for the WaterDome, an event that brings together all water-related actors and organizations at the WSSD.

Water has risen, to the top of the WSSD agenda and delegates will be discussing various water-related goals-including one for water use in agriculture, proposed by Mr. Kofi Annan's water ambassador, the Prince of Orange. The Prince suggests that in order to meet the growing water needs of other sectors we must aim to *"achieve targets for reducing malnutrition and poverty without increasing water diverted to agriculture over the level of the year 2000."* The Challenge Program on Water and Food proposes to adopt this aim as the key quantitative target to measure its achievements.

Prof. Frank Rijsberman Director General