

April 22, 2004

Dear Ian and Francisco:

I am pleased to attach the final report of our review of the CGIAR Partnership Committees. I am all the more pleased that it reflects a full consensus that the three of us were able to achieve, no easy task, given the considerable differences between the approaches that were taken and the trajectories experienced by the two committees.

It must also be said that this review turned out to be infinitely more complex and demanding than we had anticipated, especially in relation to resource availability. We hope, however, that perseverance has paid off and that we now deliver to you - and through you to all interested parties - a product that will facilitate understanding and learning from the partnership committees' experiences to date and will prove of value in seeking pathways to cost-effective CG partnerships in the future.

We would, of course, welcome commentary and feedback.

I have earlier written on behalf of my colleagues to thank the members of the Advisory Group (as well as to Selcuk and Sarwat) for their very helpful comments and suggestions. I should like to take this opportunity to express directly to both of you the team's especially deep gratitude to Sarwat for his steadfast assistance, understanding, encouragement and friendship throughout this exercise.

With very best regards to both of you.

Keith  
(also in the name of Sunita Narain and Gerhard Prante)

Keith A Bezanson  
Director  
Institute of Development Studies  
at the University of Sussex  
Brighton BN1 9RE  
Tel: +44 (0)1273 678264  
Confidential fax: + 44 (0) 1273 678349  
Email: k.bezanson@ids.ac.uk

# **INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEES OF THE CGIAR**

## **Final Report**

Keith A. Bezanson (Chair)  
Sunita Narain  
Gerhard Prante

April 2004



# Table of Contents

|                   |  |           |
|-------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>Preface</b>    |  |           |
| <b>Part One</b>   | <b>Background, Purpose and Methodology</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.1               | Background   | 1         |
| 1.2               | The Commission of this Evaluation: Mandate and Composition   | 2         |
| 1.3               | Approach/Methodology   | 3         |
| <b>Part Two</b>   | <b>Review of the NGO Partnership Committee (NGOC)</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
| 2.1               | Overview of the Evolution of the NGOC  | 5         |
| 2.2               | The Partnership Experience from the Perspectives of NGOC Members   | 9         |
| 2.3               | Observations and Conclusions of the Evaluation Team on the CGIAR-NGOC Engagement                                 | 12        |
| <b>Part Three</b> | <b>Review of the Private Sector Committee (PSC)</b>  | <b>15</b> |
| 3.1               | Overview of the Evolution of the Private Sector Committee (PSC)  | 15        |
| 3.2               | Results of Questionnaire Survey and Interviews   | 22        |
| 3.3               | Observations and Conclusions of the Evaluation Team on the CGIAR-PSC Engagement                                  | 26        |
| <b>Part Four</b>  | <b>Other Partnership Perspectives</b>  | <b>29</b> |
| <b>Part Five</b>  | <b>Concluding Observations and Some Suggestions for the Future of CGIAR Partnerships</b>                         | <b>34</b> |
| 5.1               | Business as Usual is not an Option   | 34        |
| 5.2               | Is There a Will to Persevere With or Restore the Two Partnership Committees?                                     | 35        |
| 5.3               | What Are the Characteristics of the Partnerships being Sought?   | 37        |
| 5.4               | What Guidance does Empirical Evidence provide on Public-Private Partnerships?                                    | 40        |
| 5.5               | Can New Approaches in Providing International (or Global) Public Goods Assist the CGIAR in Building Partnerships | 41        |
| 5.6               | Can Lessons be Learned and Guidance Provided to the CGIAR from the Partnership Experiences of Others?            | 43        |
| 5.7               | Some Further Recommendations of Possible Next Steps  | 46        |
| <b>Part Six</b>   | <b>Executive Summary and Concluding Remarks</b>  | <b>53</b> |
| 6.1               | The CGIAR-PSC Experience: 1995-2004  | 54        |
| 6.2               | The NGOC Experience: 1995-2002   | 58        |
| 6.3               | An Urgent Need for Clear Thinking on Development Partnerships  | 62        |
| 6.4               | Some Suggestions and Recommendations   | 67        |
| 6.5               | Concluding Remarks   | 73        |
| <b>Appendix A</b> | <b>Questionnaire</b>   | <b>74</b> |



## PREFACE

The idea of 'partnerships' between Public Agencies, the Private Sector and Civil Society has assumed a dominant position in the international development narrative. The narrative generally asserts as self-evident that such partnerships are essential to improved development effectiveness, that they bring about gains in 'voice', efficiency and ownership, and that by 'achieving synergies' they reduce costs and competition for the same price and product markets. Given the dominance of this narrative, it is unsurprising that partnership arrangements are often sought as ends in themselves and with little testing as to whether they actually improve cost-effectiveness.

This is problematic, for, as the evidence that is available shows, partnerships can also serve to reduce cost-effectiveness ratios. The very term 'partnership' is vague and can span objectives that range from – at the lower end - information sharing and 'getting to know each other better', to learning about how two parties might work together, to specific actions of an interdependent nature that assign responsibilities and accountabilities to two or more parties, to – at the higher end - an almost seamless blending of actors. Clearly, different types of partnerships depend upon different levels of trust, organisational cultures, target clienteles/areas, or commonalities of mandate. At the higher end, partnerships entail 'distributed power' that depend on consensus, on changes in mindsets and on highly complex processes of political economy and of political accountability. There are also major issues and problems of asymmetry of power, influence, capabilities, experience and credibility, but these are seldom dealt with directly and transparently. The result has been that international development partnerships often create the patina of an equality that simply does not exist and that serves to generate disappointment, frustration and resentment.

The CGIAR was founded and structured thirty-two years ago on an institutional partnership basis and served as a pioneer in bringing about collaboration for agricultural development between governments, foundations, universities, research institutes and scientists. Like most international development organisations, the CGIAR recently undertook important and conscious efforts to extend its partnerships to embrace non-governmental organisations and the private sector. In 1995, two Partnership Committees were established, a Non-Governmental Organisations Committee (NGOC) and a Private Sector Committee (PSC) with the specific aim that these should act as catalysing forces in advancing the number and quality of the CGIAR's development partnerships

This study was commissioned to examine the experience of both Committees from their inception to the present. The Terms of Reference are summarised in two questions:

- How successful have the Committees been in achieving their mission?
- Are there alternative ways in which the CGIAR could achieve the Committees' mission more efficiently?

Addressing these questions has been a challenging task, not least of which because the CGIAR has itself been experiencing rapid change and transformation and because the strategic and programmatic context for CGIAR partnerships has also subject to important and rapid change. In addition, only very limited resources were assigned to this task (35 days in total - 15 to the Chair and 10 each to the other team members). In spite of these limitations, we have attempted to ensure a comprehensive approach involving desk study and literature

review, questionnaires and interview. It goes without saying, however, that we have not looked directly into the on-the-ground partnership experiences of the 16 CGIAR Centres. This was not part of our ToRs, but it does comprise important unfinished business and one of the recommendations in this report is that the CGIAR needs to address this directly.

Thus, there is unfinished business, especially with regard to the second question listed above (Are there alternative ways in which the CGIAR could achieve the Committees' mission more effectively?). This caveat notwithstanding, we hope that this report provides the CGIAR family, including past and current members of both the NGOC and PSC Committees, with a solid basis for shared reflection on the partnership experience to date and with ideas and approaches that may prove useful in addressing future arrangements.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to all those who gave time to this study through responses to the questionnaires and to the numerous follow-up interviews. Included here are current and former members of both Committees, the DG's and Chairs of the Centres, Heads of NARS, CGIAR donors and co-sponsoring organisations, and senior agricultural scientists. In addition to these, we wish to acknowledge the invaluable inputs and assistance provided by John Clark, Sam Dryden, Len Good, Catherine Gwin, Jonathan Lash, Uma Lele, Peter Matlon, Carolyn Reynolds, Gary Toenniessen, Kul Gautam, Rodney Cook, Richard Sandbrook, Alex Sha kow, Akio Morishima, Peter de Janosi, and Francisco Sagasti. Finally, we are especially grateful to Selcuk Ozgediz and Sarwat Hussain of the CGIAR Secretariat whose constant support, assistance, critical reviews of earlier drafts and friendship proved invaluable in facilitating our efforts.

The usual disclaimer applies: any errors of omission or commission are ours.

Keith A. Bezanson (Chair)  
Sunita Narain  
Gerhard Prante

April 21, 2004

# Review of CGIAR Partnership Committees

## **PART ONE BACKGROUND, PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY**

### **1.1 Background**

In the early 1990s, following some twenty years of continuous programme growth and budgetary expansion, the CGIAR confronted a major financial crisis. On the one hand, there were real and nominal declines in overall financing. On the other, many of the main traditional sources of financial support to the CGIAR had transferred funding away from core programmes, choosing rather to earmark contributions to specific projects and trust fund arrangements.

The causes of this crisis were not merely a function of generally declining ODA levels but also had to do with serious concerns about the continuing relevance and developmental cost-effectiveness of the CGIAR system. Among the central concerns expressed at that time was a generally-held view that the CGIAR was simply failing to respond adequately to new opportunities and to new demands, including:

- scientific and technological advances and breakthroughs, especially in biotechnology and the dominance of the international Private Sector in these areas;
- the increasing complexity of IPR issues and the challenges these were posing to existing assumptions about the boundaries of essential public goods;
- the numerous and centrally important roles of Civil Society in all aspects of international development;
- the radical shift that had occurred in the comparative advantage of the CGIAR, whereby it had become increasingly difficult to make the case that the agricultural research needs of most of Asia could best be served via CG Centres. Across a broad range of countries, the dominant viewpoint had become that such research could be done more cost effectively and at least as well within the countries themselves, with the exception of sub-Saharan Africa.

In response to the financial crisis, in 1994 the then-Chairman of the CGIAR, Ismail Serageldin, championed a major, new initiative whose stated aim was not merely to reverse the declining trend in financial support to the CGIAR but to ‘afford the CGIAR the means to meet the new development challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to reaffirm recognition of the role of the CGIAR as the most effective of investments in sustainable human development’<sup>1</sup> (underlining ours).

A key milestone in this effort to transform the fortunes of the CGIAR was the special Ministerial Meeting of February 1995 in Lucerne, Switzerland. That meeting explicitly acknowledged that effective and mutually-beneficial partnerships with NGOs and the Private Sector were ‘critical imperatives to a fully effective CGIAR system.’ In this regard, the

---

<sup>1</sup> Opening statement to Special Ministerial Meeting, Lucerne, Switzerland, February, 1995.



Lucerne meeting also acknowledged that the CGIAR's existing partnership model - based largely on linkages between the CG Centres and the advanced public sector laboratories and universities in 'developed' countries - had become outdated. It had been constructed to meet the circumstances prevailing in an earlier time when international agricultural R&D was defined by a relatively sharp role segmentation and division of labour and it also predated the dramatic expansion that had occurred in the role of international Civil Society in addressing issues of food security, sustainable livelihoods and technological innovation aimed at meeting the needs of poor and marginalised agricultural producers. Accordingly, the Lucerne meeting concluded that the existing CGIAR model was inadequate and it recommended the establishment of two new committees in order to address this: the Non-Governmental Committee (NGOC) and the Private Sector Committee (PSC).

Both Committees were established and commenced functioning in the same year (1995). Between 1995 and 2002, the operations of both Committees were financed, at least in large measure, by the CGIAR (see following table). They remained in continuous operation until 2002 when the NGOC unilaterally suspended ('froze') its relationship with the 'CGIAR at system level'.

**CGIAR Financing of NGOC and PSC (US\$)**

| <b>YEAR</b>   | <b>NGOC</b>      | <b>PSC</b>     | <b>TOTAL</b>     |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1995-1996     | 160,000          | 50,000         | 210,000          |
| 1997          | 125,000          | 75,000         | 200,000          |
| 1998          | 300,000          | 70,000         | 370,000          |
| 1999          | 250,000          | 100,000        | 350,000          |
| 2000          | 200,000          | 100,000        | 300,000          |
| 2001          | 140,000          | 35,000         | 175,000          |
| 2002          | 150,000          | 60,000         | 210,000          |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>1,325,000</b> | <b>490,000</b> | <b>1,815,000</b> |

## **1.2 The Commission of this Evaluation: Mandate and Composition**

Four convergent factors led to the commissioning of this evaluation:

1. First and foremost, it is part of the CGIAR reform program aimed at streamlining System governance. All CGIAR Committees are being examined in the process. This has already resulted in closures (The Oversight Committee, Finance Committee and the Science Partnership Committee) and the transformation of the TAC into a Science Council. With the completion of this review, the CGIAR's entire committee structure will have undergone major examination.
2. The second related to the unilateral freeze that had been announced by the NGOC. In addition to obvious questions about the experience over the seven years of the CGIAR-NGOC partnership, the freeze also raised pragmatic questions of how the CGIAR ought to respond and if/how it ought to seek to 'un-freeze' the relationship.
3. The third related to the fact that, quite independent of the NGOC's action, the PSC had signalled over several years its concern that the partnership relationship needed to

be reviewed and repositioned. In two separate teleconferences between the PSC and the CGIAR Secretariat in 2001, the PSC has emphasised the urgency for the CGIAR to clarify its view of the purpose of the Committee.

4. Finally, the fourth factor was generic and had to do with a general sense within both Committees and at the level of the CGIAR Executive Council that there were a number of difficulties and problematic differences in the functioning of the partnerships that needed to be better understood in order that they might successfully be resolved.

Given these four factors, the CGIAR's Annual General Meeting of 2002 agreed to commission an independent, external review of both the NGOC and the PSC. The resulting Terms of Reference pose two basic questions:

- How successful have the Committees been in achieving their mission?
- Are there alternative ways in which the CGIAR could achieve the Committees' mission more efficiently?

An evaluation team and an advisory group were commissioned in 2003 (June), comprising:

#### ***Evaluation Team***

- Keith Bezanson - Chair – (Director, Institute of Development Studies, United Kingdom)
- Sunita Narain - Member for NGOC – (Director, Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, India)
- Gerhard Prante - Member for PSC – (former CEO of AgrEvo and deputy CEO of Aventis Crop Science, Frankfurt am Main, Germany)

#### ***Advisory Group***

- Hamid Narjisse, Director-General, Institute National de Recherche Agronomique, Morocco
- Ruth Haug, Director of Research, NORAGRIC, Norway
- Elisio Ponce, Visiting Research Fellow, PIDS, Philippines
- H-Joachen De Haas, Head, Agriculture and Rural Development Division, BMZ, Germany

### **1.3 Approach/Methodology**

The approach/methodology that we have employed in undertaking this evaluation has involved:

- ✓ *An extensive literature review* of materials relating to the functioning of the two Committees from 1995 to 2003. The evaluation team has examined the written outputs from both Committees, including the minutes of meetings, summary records of proceedings and decisions, reports of field visits, mid term and annual reports, special submissions and official communications from the Committees to the CGIAR Chair and/or Secretariat, and briefing notes.

- ✓ *A structured questionnaire* (included as Annex A) sent to 129 potential respondents including:
- The Directors-General of the 16 CG Centres;
  - The Board Chairs of the 16 CG Centres;
  - Key spokespersons of the four Co-sponsoring organisations (FAO, IFAD, UNDP and the World Bank);
  - Current and former members of PSC and the NGOC;
  - A cross-section of key CGIAR investors (countries, international organisations, regional organisations and foundations);
  - A sample of partnership research organisations (NARS) within developing countries; and
  - A sample of senior international agricultural scientific researchers with close ties (current and/or historical) to the CGIAR.

In order to encourage candid responses, respondents were assured anonymity.

- ✓ *Telephone and face to face interviews.* Telephone and face-to-face interviews were arranged both as follow-up to the structured questionnaire and to obtain responses from several key individuals who did not initially complete the questionnaire. These afforded the evaluation team the opportunity to seek clarification on important points and to probe more deeply on key issues.

Of the 129 potential respondents, a total of 70 (54%) either completed the questionnaire and/or were interviewed by telephone or in person. The evaluation team is pleased to have achieved this rate of response which has added to the confidence level of the robustness and representativeness of the observations and conclusions reached in this study.

- ✓ *A selective review of the partnership experiences and assessments of other organisations.* With a view to learning from experiences elsewhere, the Evaluation Team sought to obtain comparative and contrasting perspectives across a range of institutions that have, like the CGIAR, recently undertaken to increase public-private-Civil Society partnerships for international development. In some cases (e.g. World Bank) we profited from the results of formal evaluations that had been carried out. In other cases, we interviewed senior representatives of institutions such as UNICEF, United Nations, World Resources Institute, Global Environmental Facility, Rio Tinto, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, and the Mineral, Mining and Sustainable Development project. In yet other cases, information readily available from the Internet provided helpful insights into the experiences of organisations such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the Mountain Forum, the Réseau Internationale des ONG sur la Désertification, and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization.

Our examination of the experiences of other organisations has necessarily been selective and cursory, holding no claim to representativeness. It has, however, provided a helpful and informative backdrop to our examination of the CGIAR partnership committees and our conversations with representatives from these other organisations has afforded valuable feedback on our observations and conclusions.

## **PART TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE NGO PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE (NGOC)**

Part Two has three sections. The first deals with an overview of the functioning of the NGOC from its inception in 1995 to the ‘freezing’ of the relationship in October 2002. It suggests distinct phases in the Committee’s evolution beginning with an enthusiastic first phase (1995-1998) characterized by rapid start-up and the building of a supporting network of institutions, through an intermediate phase (1998-2001) aimed at expanding constituency for the partnership, and ending with a paradoxical phase (2001-2002) of increasing engagement (e.g. membership on CGIAR Executive Council) and subsequent unilateral disengagement.

The second section provides a brief distillation of the perceptions and perspectives of former and current members<sup>2</sup> of the NGOC. It summarises the expectations for the NGOC as expressed by this constituency as well as viewpoints with regard to successes and failures.

The third section comprises the observations and conclusions of the evaluation team on the CGIAR-NGOC engagement.

#### **2.1 Overview of the Evolution of the NGOC**

##### *Phase 1: Networking, perspective sharing, defining and communicating NGO positions*

Following on from the decision at Lucerne, a fully-functioning NGOC was very quickly established. At its first meeting in October of that year it defined its aims in the following broad terms:

- to strengthen people-centred approaches to sustainable agriculture; and,
- to contribute to a mutual understanding among NGOs, CGIAR and farmers’ organisations, by facilitating communication between the NGO community and CGIAR members and by providing policy inputs from its perspective.

In its first year, the Committee focussed on fact finding. Its members travelled extensively, met different constituencies, and visited a number of CG centres. At the mid-term meeting (May 1996) in Indonesia a number of findings were formally reported by the Committee, notably that: work with NGOs had not been mainstreamed in the CG system; CGIAR staff appeared to be either too busy for or possibly resistant to working with NGOs; within the CG Centres the relationship between the CG and Civil Society was consigned to committees; and domestic NGOs in countries where CG Centres were located were by and large either unaware or confused about the programmes and work of the Centres. Building on this assessment, the Committee subsequently (October 1996) tabled a five point proposal aimed at improving the situation through the strengthening of partnerships:

- i Reinforcement of NGO-CG centres collaboration and the need to invest more time and money in seeking out NGO research partners. NGOs must be partners from the beginning of the research process to the end;

---

<sup>2</sup> By current members, we refer to those who were serving members in 2002 and whose term of appointment would still be valid had the freeze not occurred.

- ii. Create a fund for collaborative research programmes, involving NGOs and the international centres;
- iii. International centres should be mandated to work closely with NGOs to disseminate farmer-inspired research;
- iv. Put a higher priority on including NGO representatives – people working with farmer and farmer organisations – on governing bodies of the centres. Include NGOs in the design of mid-term plans. Review how NGO partners might contribute to identification and implementation of agroecological-oriented research.
- v. CG review should include the review of relevance of CG science to the poor.

In 1997, the Committee continued to expand its knowledge of CG centres through visits to ICRAF and IITA. It also included in its travels an extensive round of NGO consultations in Cameroon, Mali, and the Andean countries of Latin America. In addition, it presented the AGM of the CGIAR in October 1997 with a position paper on biotechnology deriving from its consultations. This paper drew attention to serious misgivings of the NGO community, warning that endorsement of biotechnology by the CG system might alienate much of the NGO community which held serious reservations that biotechnological development was highly privatised and run by large transnational corporations, and that biotechnological research was heavily biased towards high-tech agriculture that had little or no relevance to the problems of small and peasant farmers. The paper further pointed to concern about the biosafety of products and concluded that the proposed relationship of the CG system with the Private Sector needed careful review to understand the 'precarious economic (leverage) condition of the CG with respect to the billion-dollar research budgets of multinational corporations'.

This position paper was followed in May 1998, by a committee position on Intellectual Property Rights. The essence of the position was that the CGIAR should advocate in multilateral fora on behalf of poor farmers and for farmers' rights, on the need to protect biodiversity and to retain genetic resources in the public domain.

*Phase 2: Building a constituency and activities*

By the end of 1998, the NGOC appears to have accorded somewhat less attention to global policy issues such as agricultural biotechnology and IPR and to have focussed increasingly on specific areas and activities that might be conducive to CGIAR-NGO partnerships. In May 1999, a proposal was made to restructure the geographic membership on the committee (to ensure equal representation – two members each from Asia, Africa, Latin America and one from US and Europe) with the aim of improving linkages between the CGIAR and 'small-farmer interests'. It proposed that the newly structured Committee should act:

- a. To assist the CGIAR to achieve its poverty reduction goals by channelling Civil Society perspectives and accumulated experiences, so that poor farmers could benefit directly from international agricultural research;
- b. To advocate priorities, concerns and interests of small farmers;
- c. To establish effective and mutually beneficial partnerships between NGO-farmer organisations and agricultural research centres.

Throughout 2000-2001, the Committee organised a number of regional meetings, workshops and consultations specifically aimed at identifying agricultural research issues of priority

concern to small farmers in different regions of the world – from scaling up successful agricultural initiatives, effective integrated pest management programmes, organic agriculture and the knowledge systems required to support local innovation. These meetings accorded specific attention to priority setting in agricultural research and to engagement strategies that would link these to the CG system and to partnership arrangements with NGOs. This work was in parallel to and was viewed as complementary to the work of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR)<sup>3</sup>.

During this same period, the NGOC also attempted to translate broad principles into concrete proposals for partnerships and held meetings with donors to discuss these<sup>4</sup>. Included, for example, were proposals for:

- a global programme for documenting and promoting local innovations in agroecology and natural resource management (Prolinnova);
- an interactive database for exchanging information about practice-tested experiences (InterDev);
- a multistakeholder learning platform on techniques for direct sowing, mulching and cropping (DMC);
- a database on scaling-up successful local initiatives in agroecology and resource management.

During this period, some clear signs of dangers were signalled in the relationship between the committee and the CGIAR NGOC members expressed their increasing sense of frustration at what they interpreted as a one-way flow of positions and proposals into the CGIAR system with little or no evidence of responsiveness.

This was also a period of major CGIAR internal reviews and restructuring and of increasing Civil Society engagement, including activism, in global agricultural research in preparation for the Global Food Summit. In May 2001, the NGOC endorsed a broad Civil Society declaration signed by over 70 groups critiquing the report of the CGIAR Change Design and Management Team. The declaration expressed the following serious reservations about many of the report's main proposals for management and governance changes within the CGIAR:

- On regionalisation: It claimed that the regionalisation content of the change plan that the CGIAR had just adopted was deeply flawed ('...this error will seriously undermine the viability and effectiveness of the CGIAR system in the future').

---

<sup>3</sup> The GFAR initiative, headquartered at FAO, was launched in 1996. It seeks to achieve effective partnerships and synergies in agricultural research by bringing together advanced research institutes in the North, national agricultural research institutes in the South, donor agencies and governments. It assigns particular importance to national agricultural research systems as the cornerstones of the global research system and its mission statement accords specific recognition to 'the crucial role played by farmers, especially women, in agriculture and natural resources management... (and to)...building on...indigenous knowledge systems (GFAR Declaration of Global Partnership in ARD, 31 October, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> In this period NGOC was also working to strengthen the input of Civil Society into CG affairs. With funds from Ford Foundation it coordinated an electronic conference in January 2001 and consultations in Frankfurt in July 2001. As a result of this initiative a task force was set up to prepare an International Alliance for Agricultural Research and Development (IAARD) and a proposal submitted to Ford for further funding.

- On participation in priority-setting: It drew attention to the process of regional priority-setting for agricultural research that had been underway since October 2000 under the coordination of GFAR and TAC and expressed concern that the CGIAR's Change Design and Management report risked 'marginalising this endeavour' through 'symbolic or token consultations (that) are unlikely to affect research in the ways needed'.
- On representation in governance: It expressed concern over the adequacy of proposals and efforts to improve governance of the CGIAR system. While it welcomed the decision to include the chair of the NGOC in the Interim Executive Council of the CGIAR, it also doubted that this step would allow the 'voices of Civil Society (to be)...adequately heard in the processes of CGIAR decision-making and it proposed establishing a 'farmer committee' to allow representatives of farmer organisations to make their voice heard directly<sup>5</sup>.

By the latter half of 2001, there were clearly indications of increasing NGOC frustration and even of distrust with the CGIAR-NGOC relationship.

*Phase 3: Increasing engagement and eventual disengagement*

At the end of 2001, NGOC membership changed substantially<sup>6</sup> and this led to an NGOC review of its strategy and to open questioning of the utility of the partnership committee arrangement. The new Committee noted that the two biggest challenges for the NGOC remained:

- Its lack of widely mobilised constituency and therefore its inadequate reflection of the wide range of perspectives within Civil Society; and,
- Difficulty in persuading the CGIAR to recognise the strength of opinion from Civil Society about changes required in research in order to address the needs of smallholder farmers and their organisations.

The report of the NGOC presented at the 2002 November meeting in Manila, underscored the extent to which CGIAR-NGOC relationships had deteriorated. The report began by cataloguing an impressive number of activities undertaken by the Committee over the previous year (regional workshops, global summit meetings, participation in the International Alliance on Agricultural Research and Development, visits to research centres and efforts to influence the CGIAR system through individual meetings and field visits). The report then continued to level a number of serious accusations against the CGIAR, as follows:

- 'CGIAR is deviating from its mandate to produce public goods for the benefit of poor agricultural producers and to safeguard genetic resources taken from farmers' fields and held in public trust by the CGIAR gene banks, by adopting a corporate agenda for agricultural research and development. The consideration of Syngenta Foundation's membership was one such instance as well as the quest for partnerships with the Private Sector, which undermine the public role of CGIAR.

---

<sup>5</sup> Specifically, the NGOC commentary stated that: 'The CGIAR has – at least in its rhetoric – become more open to stakeholder participation, but failure to bring direct voice of farmers at global level will minimise the credibility of CG claims.'

<sup>6</sup> Three new members (from Uganda, Zimbabwe and Philippines, respectively) were added, the European member stepped down because of pressure of work and the terms of two members from Asia and Latin America were coming to an end.

- It has failed to support an immediate moratorium on the release of GM crops in their centres of origin and diversity in the light of GMO contamination in Mexico and the potential contamination of other centres in the years ahead.
- It has failed to uphold the principle of the FAO-CGIAR Trust agreement that requires all germplasm and its genetic parts and components to remain in the public domain.
- It has actively promoted genetic engineering technologies and products, which are incompatible with farmer-led agroecological research.’

The report then concluded that: ‘in the light of these concerns, the NGOC is reassessing its relationship with the CGIAR’, that it would be undertaking a detailed review of its engagement and that it would also ‘freeze’ membership on its Committee until the review was complete.

Events at the Manila meeting caused matters to go further. When the CGIAR announced at that meeting that it had granted CGIAR membership to the Syngenta Foundation, farmers’ groups, present at the meeting and organised under the People’s Street Conference, were incensed and the NGOC was subjected to exceptional pressures. In immediate response to the Syngenta announcement, a Civil Society coalition of farmers’ and peoples’ movements issued a communiqué stating that: ‘the CGIAR has shown itself unable or (un)willing to reform’<sup>7</sup>. Some groups issued a public call for the NGOC to resign in protest, saying that ‘there is no room for second thoughts, they should resign and lead a walk-out in solidarity of billions of farmers struggling against imperialist control and for a farmer-centered agricultural system’<sup>8</sup>.

In response, the NGOC announced that it had taken a decision to ‘freeze’ unilaterally its relationship with CGIAR at the ‘system level and not to accept resources from the system’ as well as to ‘freeze its seats on and not participate in the Executive Committee’<sup>9</sup> ‘and other committees.

Civil Society engagement with the CGIAR via the NGOC was clearly in crisis and had been transformed into proactive disengagement.

## **2.2 The Partnership Experience from the Perspectives of NGOC Members**

### ***Expectations and motivations: Why did members of the international NGO community people join the Committee?***

It is entirely unambiguous from the questionnaire and interview results of this evaluation that individuals who agreed to serve as members of the NGOC did so on the basis of highly divergent expectations and motivations. For several, the principal motivating factors were to learn from the CGIAR as an institution they held in generally high regard. For another it was to learn how the system functioned and to identify practical ways of collaborating with it. For another, being a member of the Committee provided an opportunity to draw to the attention of the CGIAR its faults and problems and to prevail on it to reprioritise its research

<sup>7</sup> Anon 2002, Unity Statement of the Peoples’ Street Conference, October 30, Manila, *mimeo*.

<sup>8</sup> Anon 2002, Farmers urge CGIAR NGO Committee members to resign, lead walk out in annual general meeting, Manila, Philippines, 30 October, *mimeo*.

<sup>9</sup> Anon 2002, Statement by the NGO Committee of the CGIAR, Updated 1 November 2002, Manila, *mimeo*.



programmes by ‘listening to the voices of poor farmers’<sup>10</sup>. For another, joining offered a forum to challenge the manner in which the CG system worked and promoted green revolution technologies as the solution to hunger and poverty. For yet another, the main attraction in joining was to promote agroecological production as against genetic engineering and to fix research priorities on eco-regional specific approaches and away from global commodities.

Such diverse expectations, based on diverse experiences, may have been inevitable, but in the absence of clearly understood agreements on purposes, roles and the processes for the management of differences, they do not furnish an enabling framework for constructive partnership.

***Objectives: Were they clear and realistic?***

Answers from interviewees were mixed. One member stated that the objectives were not set via systematic and conscious deliberation either by the Committee itself or through dialogue between the committee and the CGIAR, but they evolved over time, more as ‘ideals’ than clear objectives. In other words, according to this member, the objectives reflected attempts to mould the mandate to fit with broad visions of NGOC members. Others suggest that while the Lucerne process was an honest attempt by some Civil Society groups to get more openness into the governance of the CG system, the structure and political economy of the NGOC militated strongly against the delineation of clear and realistic objectives. This viewpoint described NGOC objectives as ‘grandiose’ (i.e. as opposed to realistic and attainable), the operational integrity of the Committee condemned by its dependence on CGIAR financing, and argued that these were ‘fatal flaws’ that doomed the venture from its outset.

According to others, however, the objectives that the NGOC initially set for itself were realistically fixed on collaborative principles and were achievable, but that, as the work of the Committee progressed, these were modified in ways that set up a much more confrontational relationship between the NGOC and CGIAR. The revised objectives articulated by the NGOC in 2002, according to one member, were completely unrealistic, because they did not take account of and reflect the diversity of interests and constituency of either the CGIAR or of Civil Society.

But yet others were categorically of the view that the objectives were realistic and that there are examples of successes in some areas. One interviewee gave the instance of his own organisation, which entered into agreements with CG Centres on ‘open pollinated varieties’ and is now working on a dialogue with other centres to increase access to good science and to influence the research agenda.

***What were the key achievements of the Committee?***

Several NGOC respondents were of the view that there had been important and numerous achievements and emphasis in this regard was assigned to the much increased inclusion of the voices of pro-small farmer people in the Committee. One member viewed the main NGOC achievement as the mainstreaming of natural resource management into the CGIAR agenda. Others mentioned the increased promotion of agroecology within the CG system. The dominant viewpoint concerning the key NGOC achievement, however, referred to the processes of engagement themselves, including the articulation of NGO and small farmer

---

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted, however, that the NGOC always underscored that it could not presume to speak for Farmer’s Organisations.

concerns, the planned interactions between the different Centre scientists and farmer/Civil Society, through workshops and meetings, and the initiation incrementally of joint projects between NGOs and CG scientists. Among the specific claims of achievement through the 'building of new space for involvement of the Civil Society' were the following:

- Membership on the 21-member Executive Council had provided a vantage point to push for a farmer organisations' committee and an additional seat for small-scale farmers in the council. NGOC managed to bring a discussion of farmer representation in the CGIAR onto the agenda of the Annual General Meeting in October 2002.
- NGOC also named appropriately experienced persons from Civil Society to serve in different committees of the CGIAR, such as the Genetic Resources Policy Committee. It tried to improve communication between NGO members in the various CGIAR and GFAR committees by bringing them all together twice a year in the so-called 'NGOC-Plus'. This was done to inform and support each other, so that the groups would be effective in trying to influence the CG. NGOC also managed to gain the position of vice-chair of the Programme Committee of the Executive Council.
- NGOC worked to disseminate information about CGIAR, as well as the GFAR, in order to stimulate involvement in decision-making about agricultural research. Databases and workshops were organised to advocate issues and stimulate research and collaboration.
- In 1997, the workshop of African soil fertility, co-sponsored by NGOC and ICRAF highlighted key issues and proposed the development of research programmes and collaborative work. Similarly, the efforts made by NGOC on defining a pro-poor natural resource management strategy for the CGIAR, through workshops and consultations, led to changes in CG programme focus. The concern remains to ensure effective programme implementation over time on these issues.

Thus, the view of several NGOC members was that the Committee did make a difference to the CGIAR at both the regional and Centre level. This view, however, is far from unanimous (see following).

***What were the key failures of the Committee?*** The indictment by some is very harsh. They say that the NGOC failed to make the CGIAR act differently and in accordance with the concerns and demands of poor farmers, that the committee was unable to get the CGIAR to modify its research agenda in pro-poor ways and that CGIAR statements that it is doing more research on natural resource management are just cosmetic.

Strongly negative assessments are also made by some with undisguised anger and bitterness. For example, one respondent stated that 'more reviews, more questionnaires, more challenge programmes, mean that the CG is trying to reinvent itself without understanding that there are deep changes that are required in its structure and programmes'. In the words of another: 'NGOs should now completely boycott all relationship with the CGIAR. The NGOC experience has proven that they (the CG) place no value whatsoever on Civil Society. They are the handmaidens of big business and big government. Poor farmers throughout the world would be better off if the CGIAR were to disappear completely.'

***The freeze: Is it good or bad?***

Given the above views, it is unsurprising that there is a deep divide within the NGOC on this question. To many the answer is unequivocal: the freeze in relationship was a good decision,

as there was no point in continuing the ‘charade of meaningless dialogue’. For one individual, the NGOC was simply irrelevant and Civil Society engagement with the CGIAR thrived at the level of individual centres ‘in spite of the NGOC’; the freeze was a good thing and should be permanent. .

But there are also strongly contrary views. One member stated firmly that the biggest single failure of the NGOC was in not continuing to take advantage of the reform process within the CG system and that the ‘freeze’ was wrong. Another member reiterated this view, deploring the freeze in the relationship and insisting that it was entirely unrealistic to expect the CG to support an immediate moratorium on the release of GM crops. He also insisted that the position of the NGOC on GM is, not fully supported by the data or the experience of farmers, that the issues are very complicated and that they require a nuanced response, rather than broad-based opposition. He would support enthusiastically a removal of the freeze.

### ***Processes of engagement – were they adequate?***

Again, viewpoints from NGOC members reflect deep divisions. One view is that the inclusion of a member of the NGOC on the Executive Committee of the CGIAR was a path-breaking step ahead in governance, that it called for acceptance of a gradualist mindset that would seek to make progress slowly and not to ‘win every battle’.

But other members of the Committee do not share this opinion. One member says that the representation was a difficult and ultimately untenable position ('a lone and ignored voice not backed up by a wider movement'). Another referred to 'nominal representation without any real decision-making powers (as) pointless and .....ultimately untenable.' This member further claimed that the terms of engagement had been set by the CGIAR without adequate consultation with the NGO community, that membership on the Executive Committee was tokenism and that serious concerns raised by the NGOC were never taken on board.

Another member offered a more nuanced interpretation that placed conflicting viewpoints within the NGOC at the heart of the breakdown. According to this member, some members of NGOC were committed to trying to change the CGIAR from ‘within’ and were pleased with modest gradualism and diplomatic approaches as the basis for gains. Others preferred to function from the ‘outside’ on the basis of policy analysis and lobbying at the global level.

## **2.3 Observations and Conclusions of the Evaluation Team on the CGIAR-NGOC Engagement**

The CGIAR-NGOC engagement appears to us to have been deeply (perhaps fatally) flawed from the outset for three basic reasons:

- the enormous mismatch in expectations between NGOs and the CGIAR, on the one hand, and between different members of the NGOC, on the other;
- the failure to negotiate *ex ante* an agreed operating framework, including rules of engagement and processes to address and resolve conflicts;
- the absence of agreed programmes of action and structures of accountability.
- The emergence and confluence of extremely contentious issues such as intellectual property rights, GMOs, the Monsanto debacle, biotechnology, TRIPS, globalisation

and concern over corporate dominance and private profit at the expense of public good -- issues on which there are deep conflicts to this day.

The NGOC in just the seven years of its existence restructured its mandate and objectives on three occasions, and was proposing, before the freeze in relationship, a further reassessment of its relationship and reworking its objectives. This constant need for review indicates a fundamental uncertainty about roles, functions and legitimacy.

This, however, is not an attribution of blame. Indeed, and as we hope is clear from the foregoing, the NGOC made significant efforts to make the relationship productive and positive, according, of course, to its own criteria of productive and positive. This is especially remarkable given that the NGOC in its first phase was a committee selected, appointed and financed by the CGIAR and, therefore, without doubt suspect to at least some elements of the highly diverse international NGO community.

The remit assigned to the first NGOC was, at best, opaque, involving only the general idea of catalysing relationships between the CGIAR and the vocal and influential NGO community. Given these factors, the committee did what it could. It brought to the CGIAR perspectives (no doubt at times unwelcome ones) from Civil Society on GMOs and IPRs; it travelled widely with a view to capturing and highlighting different voices and viewpoints on agricultural research; and it visited some of the CG centres in an attempt to determine complementarities. There is, however, little to indicate systematic consideration of or uptake from these inputs or even codified absorption of this knowledge.

With the benefit of hindsight, it seems from the earliest operations of the NGOC that a clear and major lacuna in the overall partnership was a structure for the internalisation of learning and resolution of competing ideas.

In what we have categorised as the second phase of NGOC activity, the intensity of activities at the regional level increased as members from different regions joined the committee and the selection of members became largely vested with the Chair of NGOC. In juxtaposition to global policy issues such as GMOs or IPRs, evidence from this phase indicates that it was definitely easier to engage at the regional or specific Centre level, through workshops and other activities. The evidence also indicates that, to some extent at least, a strategy focussed at this level produced positive results. The involvement of NGOs in documenting successful initiatives, in advocating the scaling up of these approaches, and in bringing to bear the issues of sustainability and equity in agricultural research, all seem to have contributed to the CGIAR at different levels.

Yet, in parallel with these gains, areas of substantial disagreement also grew, because the very diversity of the NGO community meant that without meaningful and structured exchange on global policy issues, other efforts at engagement were bound to be interpreted by many as superficial. Even the provision of a seat to the NGOC at the CGIAR Executive Council – a step that is unusual and viewed by many as commendable – was interpreted by some as a hollow gesture and even as an attempt to ‘buy silence and docility’. This again underscored the absence of planned institutional mechanisms between the CGIAR and the NGOs to benchmark activities and disagreements and to set up forums for resolution.

Because of this, underlying differences were never resolved. Global policy issues and concerns on GMOs, IPRs, public-private partnerships in research and governance were raised

by the NGOC as regular items in the CGIAR mid-term and annual meetings, but there is little to suggest how either side followed up with approaches aimed at resolving the differences. The impression from the official records of these meetings is that these issues became ritualistic, with the NGOC voicing fully predictable perspectives and the CGIAR system recording these with equal predictability.

The NGOC never established for itself a clear mandate to monitor the performance of the CGIAR on either a system level or with regard to key issues of concern. Yet, an 'annual report card' on key indicators might have become an important instrument to open up systematic discourse, particularly as the NGOC reported to the Annual General Meeting in the presence of both governments and donors. At the same time and as already noted, the CGIAR system never set itself either benchmarks or an accountability framework to respond to NGOC policy issues, let alone to internalise their expressed concerns. As a result, to a considerable extent, the discourse on global policy matters between the NGOC and the CGIAR system became a dialogue of the deaf.

Notwithstanding these difficulties and shortcomings, the Committee had some notable positive impact. This was clearly not as far-reaching or substantial as many desired, but change, as one NGOC member put it, had been 'significant through small and gradual steps' and could be seen in shifts in the research agenda of the CGIAR, and in the importance assigned to agroecology, environmental considerations, participation and traditional knowledge. We do not claim that these changes are attributable entirely to the NGOC, but it does seem reasonable to assume that the wider Civil Society movement was definitely a contributing factor. Sadly, however, these contributions were not documented either by the CGIAR or the NGOC, nor were the positive change-making aspects of the relationship. As a result, the perception of failure grew and became increasingly widespread amongst NGOC members and probably within its broader Civil Society constituency.

In all this, the frustration of the NGOC appears to have grown. It looked increasingly outside the CGIAR system for support and alliances so that its concerns about and priorities for international agricultural research could be translated into concrete actions. A positive externality to the NGOC experience may have been the spawning of a much more widespread interest in agricultural research, but neither the NGOC nor the CGIAR system appear to have focussed on the strategies required to benefit from the growing public concern and constituency. The vast and broad NGOC constituency demanded accountability from 'its representatives' and, paradoxically, the growth of interest in international agricultural research became divisive and eventually destructive of the NGOC.

It is apparent, then, that the basis for this engagement has become severely vitiated and defined by deep distrust. In the view of the evaluation team, however, the root causes of the failures and disappointments of this experiment are much deeper than the shortcomings in the approaches followed either by the NGOC or the CGIAR system. Rather, it is our view that this experiment can only be properly and constructively understood if it is placed and interpreted in its larger context; a context that accounts for the overwhelming complexity of engagements such as those that aim to function simultaneously at the local, national and global levels, to accommodate a bewildering diversity of interests, and to combine the best of the highly advanced sciences with advocacy, activism and grassroots ministrations to the most needy and vulnerable of our world.

## **PART THREE**

### **REVIEW OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR COMMITTEE (PSC)**

Part 3 follows the same order as the preceding presentation on the Non-Governmental Organisations Committee. It begins with a chronological summary of the key events in the evolution of the PSC from its inception in 1995 to the present. It then presents a distillation from questionnaire results and interviews of the viewpoints and assessments of the members of the PSC. Finally, it presents the evaluation team's observations and conclusions with regard to the PSC.

#### **3.1 Overview of the Evolution of the Private Sector Committee (PSC)**

##### ***Phase 1: 1995-1998***

At its inception in 1995, the PSC was set up as a ten member committee 'appointed by the CGIAR Chair...(and) led by a chair and co-chair'. Its brief was that it should act in an 'advisory role on matters such as current and future strategic needs and priorities for agricultural research in developing countries, future strategies of the Private Sector in agriculture research activities or CGIAR policies and strategies by:

- meeting twice a year for approximately two days;
- interacting with the various elements of the CGIAR system and the clients that it serves in developing countries;
- consulting with the CGIAR Chair;
- organising meetings, workshops and consultations to demonstrate the activities of the Private Sector in developing countries to members and components of the CGIAR.'

This remit was clearly in the category of 'process-based', as opposed to 'output-based' or 'outcome-based'. While the largely open-ended and non-constraining nature of this remit may have held advantages, it did not address, let alone define, expectations. The tasks of defining the expectations for the PSC and of establishing its precise roles and responsibilities were essentially left to the committee itself.

The PSC apparently took on this task with considerable enthusiasm and its members travelled considerable distances from various parts of the world in order to meet on four separate occasions between December 1995 and October 1996.

At the inaugural meeting in December 1995, the PSC selected four areas as potential priorities for collaboration between the CGIAR and the Private Sector. These were:

- biotechnological science and its applications to achieve global food security and to address the needs and circumstances of poor farmers;
- policy issues at all levels (i.e. national, regional, global) in IPR, Genetic Resources, and Biodiversity;
- mechanisms for productive interaction and collaboration between the CGIAR, NARS and the Private Sector;

- mutual (i.e. between public and private sectors) learning and sharing of practices in research and research management.

A 'fast-track' process was launched to move these broad priority areas from the level of general proposition to operational levels. Four working-groups were formed and three face-to-face meetings of the full PSC scheduled in 1996 as well as the nominated members of the four working-groups. Also, in order to advance the dialogue on these areas with the CGIAR, the PSC further determined that their meetings in 1996 would take place as far as possible at CGIAR-centre locations. Finally, the PSC initiated a questionnaire survey of CGIAR centres during June/July 1996.

As its working groups met and its initial work advanced in 1996, the PSC confronted immediate problems over ambiguities in its remit and uncertainty over exactly what the CGIAR expected of it. Although it persevered with its 'fast track' plan, it also questioned and debated whether its actions were addressing or exceeding its mandate and whether it was a 'Partnership Committee' or an 'Advisory Committee'. In response to the guidance and clarification it sought from the CGIAR, it was advised that the CGIAR expected advice on ways of broadening its partnership with major players in the global agricultural research communities from both the NGOC and the PSC. The CGIAR would appear to have been anxious not to constrain the work of the Committee, but rather to encourage it to take initiatives, to self-define its boundaries and to accord it extensive free rein. Such generosity of spirit in seeking to build partnerships may be laudable at one level, but it is also clear that its lack of precision and fully open-ended character were proving problematic to the PSC even at the very earliest stages of its work.

From the outset of the work of the PSC, therefore, initiatives and proposals for partnerships derived most often from a one-way process rather than on the basis of dialogue and negotiation between collaborators. It was on this basis that the PSC in 1996 examined, defined and suggested its future role. This 'one-way flow' was to become a defining characteristic of the CGIAR-PSC relationship and was to apply equally to future topics such as biotechnology and intellectual property rights.

The imprecision as to what was expected of it, however, does not appear to have dampened the initial enthusiasm of the PSC membership. Indeed, to a large extent the open-ended quality of the remit was taken as an important act of good faith and was returned with similar good faith from PSC members who intensified their work throughout 1996 and 1997. There were three major additional contributors to the enthusiasm and impressive engagement of the PSC during its first two years: the leadership, clear focus and determination of the first chairman, the common understanding and commitment of PSC members and the solid and mutually-supportive relationship that existed between the PSC chairman and the CGIAR Secretariat. Thus at the end of 1996, the PSC concluded that the Centres survey, as well as discussion with the CGIAR Secretariat, suggested as priority areas for collaboration between the centres, NARS and the Private Sector the following:

### **Proposals Presented (October 1996) for PSC-CGIAR Collaboration**

- A global Private Sector summit on agriculture research needs to reduce poverty;
- Joint technology developments;
- Collaborative arrangements for biotechnology applications, genetic conservation, seed production, and information systems / training;
- Facilitating Private Sector provision to the CGIAR of biotechnology tools and trade in intellectual property;
- Provision of legal advice to centres (presumably on a demand-led basis) on IPR issues;
- Acting as a source of ideas and suggestions for Private Sector membership on centre boards;
- Interacting with centres on common policy questions.

At the same meeting in October 1996, the PSC also agreed on a mission statement which is presented in the following box:

### **PSC Mission Statement – October 1996**

‘The Private Sector Committee’s mission is to provide a Private Sector perspective to the CGIAR regarding the current status and future needs of global agricultural research. Through its membership the Committee reflects the view of national and international for-profit enterprises of various scales and with direct interest in agricultural research.

The Committee serves as a link between the CGIAR and the Private Sector at large and aims to force new alliances for improving food security and quality of the environment. It helps identify collaborative research opportunities of mutual benefits.

The Committee works closely with representatives of other major partners in agricultural research, including the international centres, national research systems and non-governmental organisations. It also helps to raise the awareness of the global opportunities agricultural research provides to create better livelihoods for present and future generations.’

This mission statement establishes a broad framework for a partnership predicated on mutual interest; the interest of the Private Sector in making its views and interests known to the international public agricultural research system; the interest in benefits flowing from private expertise to public benefit; and the interest in public-private partnerships to increase the prospects for international development.

The intensity of the work of the PSC continued throughout 1997. The Committee met three times on a face-to-face basis and an extensive study on strengthening CGIAR-Private Sector partnerships in biotechnology was prepared, reviewed and endorsed. It is quite clear from reviewing this study that one of its aims was to establish a more concrete basis for the PSC-CGIAR relationship through a delineation of the respective and complementary interests of



the two parties and to encourage a more operational division of labour. In this regard, the PSC biotechnology report included the following key points:

- The CGIAR needs to have its own clear, transparent policy framework and agenda on biotechnology. This cannot and should not come from the Private Sector and continuing ambiguity on this matter cannot serve either the long-term interests of the CGIAR or its partnership interests and possibilities with the Private Sector.
- The principal agenda of the Private Sector is unambiguous and it needs to be better understood throughout the CGIAR system. It is not principally an agenda of philanthropy or of public goods. It will work on problems which can lead to great public and development benefit but the ruling dimension is that these must also involve potential markets. It follows, therefore, that CGIAR-Private Sector partnerships should be driven by the agenda of the CGIAR not the agenda of the Private Sector.
- If genuine partnerships are to emerge and to prove productive and mutually beneficial, they will need to be predicated on combining complementary assets. In this connection, the report specifically suggested that one of the main assets of the international Private Sector that could provide a strong complement to the scientific capabilities of the CGIAR could be in dealing with difficult GMO issues involving bio-safety concerns and ensuring appropriate regulatory norms.

Looking back over the period from the 1995 decision at Lucerne to establish a Private Sector committee to the end of 1997, one is struck by the magnitude of goodwill and hopefulness that defined the relationship between the CGIAR and the PSC. This was evident in the trust assigned to the PSC through an essentially open-ended mandate and in the enthusiasm of the engagement by the PSC which established separate working groups and that met in face-to-face deliberation on seven separate occasions during that period and engaged itself during the same time in an extensive survey to determine needs and priorities as viewed by the CGIAR Centres and the Secretariat. The extent of the commitment that was evidently made and the willingness to take cognisance of the priorities of the CG system is all the more impressive when one considers that PSC members were from the most senior levels of the agricultural science industry.

It is also clear, however, that the end of 1997 comprised a first watershed in the relationship, with the PSC membership demonstrating substantial frustration at what was from its perspective a relative lack of feedback to its efforts or of palpable indications of partnership uptakes. Expressions of disappointment were formally registered by PSC members at the lack of response to its partnership proposals and specifically to its paper on CGIAR-Private Sector partnership in biotechnology. The results of visits to and questionnaire returns from individual Centres had been interpreted as showing a relative lack of interest or even distrust over collaboration in biotechnology and IPR and this, too, had discouraged PSC members. At this point also, the chairmanship of the PSC changed.

#### *Phase 2: 1998-2002*

PSC momentum slowed significantly over the period 1998-2002. This may be attributed partially to the intensity of internal reform and change that occurred within the CGIAR over this period, which included first the Third System Review, followed by the Change Design and Management Team (CDMT) exercise and then by the implementation of agreed reforms. Under the circumstances of such intensive and extensive change, it was probably inevitable that the rate of proposals and initiatives from the PSC would slow and that the CG at the

system level was, in any event, somewhat disadvantaged in responding to such initiatives. Whatever the explanatory factors, however, there is no doubt that this period witnessed a significant lessening of enthusiasm of PSC members.

As a result, the new Chair of the PSC faced an uphill struggle to keep the initiative alive and to sustain momentum. 'Membership fatigue' was palpable with membership changing quickly and with declining interest among remaining members in continuing with the experiment. By all accounts, the continuation of the initiative over the period 1998-2003 was principally due to the extent of the personal commitment of the new chairman and utilisation of his powers of persuasion with his PSC member-colleagues.

These efforts notwithstanding, the frequency of PSC meetings declined from three face-to-face meetings in each of 1996 and 1997 to two in 1998 and by 2001 to no face-to-face meetings and only two teleconferences. Much of the agendas for the meetings that took place over this period seemed to involve a return to a focus that was essentially at high levels of generality. The meeting in March 1998, for example, was aimed at a distillation of PSC views on CGIAR policy on Biotechnology and IPR and the meeting in October of that year focussed on discussions regarding:

- a review of IPR and Biotechnology issues in relation to the CGIAR in which the PSC stressed that Biotechnology is 'only a tool whose utility should be judged in the context of a specific research problem and in comparison with other research tools that are also effective'.
- the CGIAR system review that had been launched and was ongoing at that time;
- a generic review of the characteristics and requirements for effective research partnerships and the increasing trend towards privatisation of agricultural research;
- the continuing requirements to address the needs of the poor in the face of escalating population pressures and deteriorating natural resource base;
- the implications and opportunities for agriculture arising from an increasingly liberalised and integrated global economy.

It was also a period during which a number of policy and 'political' tensions in the relationship appear to have surfaced. For example:

- In 1998, the PSC had communicated its view that a major stumbling block for successful partnership activities was the absence of a single CGIAR policy authority. It indicated that it would lend support to any governance structure that could define operational structure for the partnership, set policy and negotiate specific arrangements for collaborative activities. It suggested that effective partnership would benefit from a reduction in the autonomy of individual centres and the creation of a single, legally-empowered centre-wide policy body on matters such as IPR guidelines.
- In early 1999, the PSC Chairman wrote formally to the CGIAR Chair expressing serious concerns about the statement on the so called 'terminator technology' that had been adopted by the CGIAR and that the PSC viewed as having implications for the relationship. The letter stated that:  
  
'... the CG statement lends .....authority to an issue that is being misused for political purposes by (those opposed to) Biotechnology... (and such)

...statements regarding early research are more appropriate to the scientific forum than the political. ....(Of greater concern) to the PSC is the political process leading to the PSC policy statements on gene protection technology. This policy statement without consultation negates the purpose of a 'partnership interaction with the Private Sector'. This is the second time the CG has issued such a statement without consulting its PSC ...'

- Also in 1999, the PSC registered a further policy concern that the 'CGIAR's stand on international public goods (needs) to be revisited, since this most likely acts as a barrier to access to technology. One possibility is to define a new category of goods, such as 'international proprietary goods'.'
- Finally in May, 2000, the PSC Chair reported to the CGIAR that: Although the CGIAR Chair has been promoting the use of new research tools, it appears that this view is not shared by all donors and centres. A united approach ...would help...'

In early 2002, a further indicator of waning interest was evident in the PSC's formal suggestion that the size of its Committee should be reduced by about one-third and that the Committee would hold short, theme based meetings at convenient locations (i.e. to schedule meetings only in response to a specific need and a specific agenda item).

At the same time, however, there were some new PSC<sup>11</sup> initiatives that were aimed at establishing renewed momentum by seeking a division of labour that could furnish a foundation for functional partnerships. The PSC Chair, for example, strongly urged the CGIAR to undertake a study of the respective centres to 'identify assets of value to others, ...to define the partnership potential of the CGIAR with the Private Sector'. To facilitate this, the PSC identified ten key assets of the CGIAR that it thought could be of significant and complementary value to those of the Private Sector, including advanced scientific expertise in twenty to twenty-five crops, well established crop-testing network and experience, positive image and accumulated political capital, a capacity to work cooperatively with developing countries in establishing policies, regulatory frameworks and standards, etc. The PSC suggested that these assets could be used by the CGIAR as 'Trading Chips' on forming partnerships with the Private Sector.

As had been the case with regard to its study of partnerships in biotechnology research, the PSC inputs and suggestions on assets complementarity appear to have been gratefully and graciously received by the CGIAR, but to have evinced little beyond this in the way of response. In 2001, the PSC extended general support to the new directions that were emerging from within the CGIAR, notably the proposed Global Challenge Programme, but formally communicated at the same time an 'urgent need for the CGIAR to clarify the purpose with its relation with the Private Sector' (underlining ours). The same communication also provided clear evidence of frustration in adding: 'Is it the CGIAR desire to have the PS 'involved' as a partner in research or is it only (seeking) 'financial support' from the Private Sector?'

---

<sup>11</sup> According to other PSC members, these initiatives resulted, more or less entirely, from an exceptional commitment and perseverance on the part of the Chairman of the committee.

*Phase 3: 2003-:*

With hindsight, the 17<sup>th</sup> PSC meeting held in London in February 2003 (almost eight years to the day from the Lucerne meeting that had given birth to both the NGOC and the PSC) was probably critical to the prospects for continuing effort and goodwill by PSC members. It was also a pivotal meeting as it was the first for many PSC members who had recently agreed to join the Committee. Due to the diligent efforts and commitment of its chairman, the PSC had made extensive preparations for the meeting and had structured its agenda with the aim of moving the Committee's engagement away from the level of another generalised policy dialogue and towards a time bound business plan for the future work of the PSC. As a consequence, most of the meeting focussed on strategic partnership issues, on agreeing on initiatives the PSC could undertake with and on behalf of the CGIAR, and on a specific time-bound work plan.

Thus, the Committee arrived at an agreed plan of work for three years that would be focussed in three (and only three) generic areas, alliance building, policy dialogue and communications which would include:

- Alliance building initiatives:
  - seeking specific programmatic linkages, complementarities and mutual opportunities within the new CGIAR challenge programmes;
  - establishing with individual centres closer relationships and understandings, including through an exchange of scientists between the Private Sector and the CGIAR, and exploring opportunities and interests in new joint initiatives of a specific programme and project nature;
  - recognising that the Private Sector is heavily engaged with the delivery of agricultural technologies and that the CGIAR is not, to seek identify and act on complementarities of mutual interest that could increase the availability of CGIAR technologies for poverty reduction.
- Policy dialogue initiatives:
  - facilitating and increasing spaces for policy exchanges and discussions of strategy between Private Sector CEOs and senior level policy makers in the World Bank, the CGIAR and other international actors;
  - creating specific opportunities for serious and systematic policy discussions on issues of public goods and intellectual property rights;
- Communication initiatives
  - building on the above, to seek appropriate opportunities for public declarations of corporate support for the efforts and initiatives of the CGIAR;
  - to invite, facilitate and support Bellagio-type meetings (i.e. similar to the meetings held in Rockefeller Foundation's facilities in Bellagio, Italy, that led to the founding of the CGIAR) to focus on longer-term issues and challenges in the building of partnerships for development.

It is obvious that the above framework remains highly general. It does not offer a detailed work plan with a clear assignment of tasks, critical path and end points. On the other hand, it does establish what could be a helpful new framework and, very importantly, it is a framework that has been formally agreed between the PSC and the CGIAR. This invites, therefore, additional work to translate the general into a more specific plan of action. As such, therefore, it could comprise an important step in the right direction, although the

trajectory of the overall PSC-CGIAR initiative since 1995 suggests that it should be greeted with a balanced combination of cautious optimism, on the one side, and informed scepticism, on the other. If it is to succeed, it will also need a much more receptive and responsive environment at the level of the individual centres and the secretariat than seems to have applied to prior efforts.

### 3.2 Results of Questionnaire Survey and Interviews

24 out of the 25 past and present PSC members were contacted as part of this evaluation. Of these, 15 completed a questionnaire; extensive, structured interviews were conducted with three others; and a further three provided general and summary commentary. In several cases, questionnaire returns and initial telephone interviews were supplemented by follow-up telephone conversations to obtain clarifications and, in some cases, to seek additional details. The following is a synopsis of the perceptions, perspectives and assessments obtained from the members of the PSC.

#### *Expectations and motivations: Why did very senior members of the international Private Sector join the Committee?*

As most of those who have served as members of the PSC have been senior CEOs or management board members in many cases of multinational food sciences companies, it is not surprising that when the majority of these assumed their roles they already had considerable knowledge about the CGIAR. Some, however, had little or no prior familiarity. The reasons given for agreeing to accept an invitation to PSC membership included a mixture of perceived self-interest and perceptions of a larger international public good. The following box provides examples of this by summarising some of the main responses to the questionnaire.

#### **Motivations for PSC Membership**

- ‘.....because stronger partnership is needed between the CGIAR and Private Sector to derive the real impacts of CGIAR research.’
- ‘.... to give voice to the needs and priorities of small business...’
- ‘...to have some impact on World Bank's (WB) sponsoring decisions.’
- ‘... opportunities (for business development...’
- ‘I thought that the credibility of several key CGIAR Centres with the backing of the World Bank would help (support) the introduction of new technologies in agriculture around the world.... I was certainly somewhat naïve...’
- ‘Because I thought that...’this group (could) contribute and positively impact world food supply.’
- ‘The topics were of interest to ...my job...(and)..it made sense to join to represent our views.’
- ‘...to help the CG mission to help the poor and hungry and protect the environment.’
- ‘Opportunity to contribute to problems of developing countries, to obtain contacts and to raise the company and industry profile.’

Motivations for accepting membership in the first PSC were, therefore, quite variable, from general support of CGIAR goals to an expectation for influence on decision-making, to the bringing to the CGIAR of a greater business spirit and entrepreneurship. In some cases, membership invitations were accepted for collegial reasons, essentially a consequence of having been approached and persuaded to join by a respected colleague either from within the Private Sector community or an international development organisation.

A majority of the membership on the first PSC also indicated that they quickly concluded that there should be no expectations that collaboration with the CGIAR would bring short-term returns to their industry, but rather that the sustainability of the engagement would require longer-term perspectives of corporate social responsibility through facilitation of more rapid agricultural economic advances in developing countries, support for the acceptance of technologies and arrangements that would increase the positive public image of the Private Sector. These factors make all the more disappointing the extent to which their perception of non-responsiveness caused PSC members to become discouraged of the entire engagement after only two years.

**Objectives: Were they clear and realistic?** Responses to this question were universally that they were not. Irrespective of the degree of prior familiarity with the CGIAR, a substantial majority indicated that they initially had little or no idea of why the two Committees had been established. As underscored previously, the open-ended, ‘trust goodwill to get it right’ approach proved problematic. PSC members complained regularly about a complete absence of clarity on what was expected. One member reflected strongly the views of others in stating that: ‘I had no idea whatsoever of what the CGIAR wanted, what it would support; or what the committee should propose. If (the CGIAR) had clear reasons for creating our committee, it did not make these known in a transparent way.’

Confusion and ambiguity over the remit and objectives assigned by the CGIAR to the PSC placed the committee in a self-defining position. PSC members seemed to have shared a general view that their efforts to self-define their role would have achieved clarity in the relationship if adequate and systematic responses had been forthcoming from the CGIAR, but that this had not been the case and, in the words of one member, ‘the net result was an ever-deepening confusion over why we were taking on the tasks we assigned to ourselves’.

**What were the key achievements of the Committee?** Although contrary views were common, a majority of PSC members viewed the very existence of the Committee as a potentially important achievement. They felt that the PSC had increased in important ways CGIAR awareness of the Private Sector, that it offered a mechanism to bring diverse interests and viewpoints to the same table and provided a forum where these could potentially be addressed in good faith and with a view to establishing common ground. Several members of the first PSC indicated that they had been especially pleased with the professionalism and thoroughness of the biotechnology study that they had done for the CGIAR (although, these same spokespersons also added that they had been disappointed and even angered by what they interpreted as the CG’s lack of responsiveness to it).

Yet PSC members were hard pressed to provide examples of concrete success in response to the question ‘Can you provide a concrete example of success that resulted from the work of the PSC and that gives cause for celebration?’. The biotechnology study was referred to but not as a cause for celebration because it was viewed as having had little if any impact. Also, several members pointed to the establishment of the CEO dialogue with the CG Chair and the

President of the World Bank and to the direct involvement of the PSC in the dialogue that led to the establishment of the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) as hopeful initiatives that might provide future cause for celebration. For the most part, however, the usual response was that: 'There simply has not yet been a concrete success that would cause me to celebrate'.

*What were the key weaknesses and/or failures of the Committee?* In sharp contrast to the quite limited responses to questions on successes and reasons for celebration, PSC interviewees had much to say about weaknesses and failures. The main points raised may be grouped into the following four categories:

- **The PSC has not succeeded in establishing direct relationships with the Centres.** A consensus viewpoint is that, because of this PSC dialogue with the CGIAR as a system has been conducted 'at an exceedingly high level of generality that cannot provide a basis for joint efforts'. Although most interviewees thought that communication between the PSC, the CGIAR Chair and the Secretariat worked well, both past and present members viewed the overall relationship as largely dysfunctional due to a lack of communication between the PSC and the Centres. This was attributed to a generalised lack of interest at Centre level, to insufficient understanding within both the PSC and the CGIAR Secretariat of the needs of the respective centres, and to vastly different time horizons (i.e. the Private Sector working on the basis of 'real time delivery' schedules not adequately appreciated within the CGIAR).
- **Private Sector representation has been 'limited', unstable', and 'imbalanced'.** The quite high turnover of membership and differences in the commitment level of members as well as the non-transparent selection process for membership are seen by the majority of past and present members as weaknesses and as barriers to effectiveness. The majority of the respondents suggest that the frequency of face to face meetings and formal/informal electronic communication are not the problem, but that trust and adequate commitment are.
- **'The Committee has been for the most part unfocussed and insufficiently 'solution-oriented'.** According to most respondents, the fact that the PSC 'has not aimed its efforts at practical solutions for practical problems' and has not been 'solution oriented', produced a relationship where there has been 'a lot of opinion seeking from the PSC'. The same respondents are of the view that it is because such opinions (and the overall relationship) are more policy-based than 'solution oriented' that they have rarely had any impact or had an effect on decisions.

*Did membership in the PSC increase appreciation of the CGIAR system?* Although not universal, most former PSC members tended to answer this question in the negative. The following box comprises a summary of responses to this question:

**Responses to the question: ‘Has PSC membership increased your appreciation of the CGIAR system?’**

- ‘My appreciation/valuation has continued to grow’.
- ‘Decreased, because I see only ‘academic’ basic research supported and no reality checks....’
- ‘I cannot link my appreciation/valuation of the CGIAR system with membership in the PSC’.
- ‘In 1995-97.....a great job (was done) to challenge and rejuvenate the sleepy CGIAR and motivate the Donors-countries. Unfortunately, in recent years ...(it has returned to) ...a bureaucratic environment’.
- ‘I have a far better understanding of the CGIAR system after this experience’.
- ‘No change, expectations were not high!’
- ‘I see more value from the centres than the CG..’
- ‘I keep on wondering how for some CGIAR centers, the donors can justify the money they spend there on behalf of developing countries, it’s dishonesty on both sides’.
- ‘The CG did not ....use and follow up the ideas and suggestions from the PSC’.
- ‘I can (now) say that the CGIAR is doing a good effort in some areas’.
- ‘Decreased (it appears more and more an ‘old boys network’ focused on self preservation...)’.

***What are the main perspectives of PSC members on the future of the Committee?***

The evaluation team was struck by the extent of ambivalence and of paradoxical viewpoints with regard to the future of the Committee. On the one hand, a number of current Committee members expressed hope that the London meeting of January 2003 had placed the work of the Committee on a new and potentially functional basis and that this could comprise a major turning point. For some, the recent ‘Challenge Programme’ (CP) (which the PSC had strongly supported) offered substantial promise for new avenues of cooperation and collaboration between the CGIAR and the Private Sector. This could bring about, they argued, strategic programmatic groupings among different Centres, significant, integrated initiatives within which there could be specific items for PSC partnerships by improving linkages to and trust with operational levels and bringing into focus areas of complementary comparative advantage. On the other hand, it was also emphasised that: ‘unless the Challenge Programme works differently from the CG as a whole, current PSC committee members will simply abandon all interest and leave’. Also, while a particularly strong view was to the effect that the CGIAR badly needed regular and systematic input from the most senior levels of the Private Sector, the interviewee claiming this also insisted that it would be ‘dangerous to bring more senior Private Sector representatives into contact with the CGIAR....(because what they would see)... would quickly drive them away’.

Both past and current PSC members agreed with near-universality that its future work requires as a first priority that the CGIAR decide and make clear what it wants and expects from the committee. This point was made by several PSC members with regard not only to its own work but to the functioning of partnership arrangements in general. One respondent expressed this sentiment in the following terms: ‘It will not matter much what our committee



does or does not do until the CGIAR sorts itself out. It ...(needs)...to decide what it wants..... It ...(is not enough for us to know what) ‘the Chairman thinks or what they want at the World Bank in Washington; the CGIAR gives out so many different messages (and these are different) between Washington and the Centres’.

In reflecting on the future of the PSC, several of its past and current members expressed quite trenchant views on their own Committee and its representativeness. In essence, these respondents drew attention to what they claimed to have been a past failure of the PSC; to connect its efforts and the CGIAR more adequately to international agricultural industry. One respondent stated this both in terms of an assessment and a hope as follows: ‘The PSC .....must have the full support of the Integrated Agricultural Industry. I would dearly love to see it that way, but I may have unrealistic expectations’. There was also internal criticism of what was perceived by some as a lack of transparency and completeness from the PSC in presenting to the CGIAR the key issues it had discussed, and it was suggested that this might be due to the diversity of the Private Sector as well as because Private Sector associations are not involved (i.e. self doubts about the extent to which the PSC could present views on behalf of the Private Sector).

Whatever else respondents communicated with regard to the experience to date of the PSC and its future, the view of the majority was unequivocally that they would support any future PSC that was focussed on specific functions, pragmatic, theme-driven and flexibly-structured in order to allow for the *ad hoc*, utilitarian participation of senior members of the international Private Sector.

### **3.3 Observations and Conclusions of the Evaluation Team on the CGIAR-PSC Engagement**

In comparison with the NGOC the PSC-CGIAR relationship has been considerably less ‘dramatic’, but many of the defining characteristics of both Committees have been remarkable similar. At the outset, both evidenced a remarkable degree of enthusiasm and commitment and in both cases initial activity levels were impressive. From the beginning, however, both struggled with uncertainty as to what was expected of them, about how to define and approach their work and over how to establish and project their legitimacy. Both concluded from initial efforts that, while their creation and work might be strongly supported at the CGIAR-system level, there was indifference (or even hostility) at the level of at least some of the Centres and from some donor agencies. Both went through successive attempts at defining and redefining their roles, mandates and status and, in parallel, both expressed growing frustration over what they interpreted as a one-way relationship and a relative absence of meaningful feedback and engagement in the partnership.

The PSC may have welcomed initially the fully open-ended and non-restrictive nature of the remit assigned to it, but with the benefit of hindsight it is clear that this invited different and irreconcilable expectations. The lack of precision and clarity as to what the CGIAR really expected of the Committee probably reflects a system-wide problem of multiple constituencies, of individual Centre autonomy and of an absence of consensus on fundamental issues of science policy (e.g. biotechnology and IPR) among the principal CGIAR donors.

On the latter point, for example, the absence of a clear, transparent and comprehensive CGIAR policy on biotechnology unquestionably posed difficulties, constraints and confusion to the work of the PSC. Yet the absence of such policy is fully understandable, given that some of the main donors to the CGIAR are inclined to be much more cautious than the international Private Sector or even most CGIAR scientists might wish. Balancing the complex and conflicting array of interests and preferences across a constituency as varied as that of the CGIAR has always been a gargantuan task; this has become all the more so in today's highly charged emotional environment surrounding agricultural biotechnology fears of 'Frankenstein foods' and of debates that polarise issues of basic human security against those of IPR and predominance of the private sector in life sciences.

This context may help to explain the absence of precision on expectations for the PSC. It does not, however, diminish the fact that the CGIAR's apparent confusion or indecisiveness over what it expected of the PSC placed the relationship on a largely untenable basis from the outset. Notwithstanding the extent of goodwill, engagement and commitment on the part of the PSC and also of the CGIAR secretariat, events unfolded like a Greek play – whatever the effort, the initial fatal flaw could not be overcome. Progressive loss of goodwill and growth of frustration seem to have been inevitable.

Over the years, the PSC made numerous suggestions and recommendations of a structural nature that were explicitly aimed at improving the relationship and establishing synergies. In its eighth meeting, for example, the PSC specifically requested that the CGIAR provide its own delineation of authorities, rights, responsibilities, points of contacts and resources. In the same meeting it went so far as to suggest that the CGIAR consider the creation of a legally empowered central policy body for issues such as IPR. The inherent desirability and logic of such requests and recommendations are undeniable. At the same time, however, the request assumed implicitly either that a hierarchy of decision-making existed within the CGIAR system or that one could quickly be established. From the cultural context of leaders of the international Private Sector it would appear entirely natural to make this assumption. There is, however, a vast cultural divide between the clear decision ('the buck stops here') structures of the Private Sector and political intricacies of the CGIAR.

Of all multilateral, international development organisational structures (i.e. the multilateral development banks, United Nations agencies), the CGIAR is arguably one of the most complex. Collective decision-making has always been difficult for the CGIAR, as was clearly evidenced in the recent Third System Review. Indeed, the specific recommendations of that Review that the CGIAR should establish a 'corporate model' of decision making (in order to formalise decision making, to increase transparency and to establish 'system accountability') were firmly rejected for being 'top-down' and 'contrary to the CGIAR's founding principles'. A main observation of several of the PSC members who were interviewed as part of this evaluation was that they 'simply found the politics of the CGIAR incomprehensible'.

What seems clear, therefore, is that however extensive the good faith and the energies expended by both parties in seeking to build private-public partnerships via the PSC, serious and particular attention to the dimensions of cultural difference are imperative if dysfunctional levels of collective frustration are to be avoided and collective will to persevere is to be preserved. The results of this evaluation indicate that attempts to address issues of cultural differences were largely absent from the processes of engagement between the

CGIAR and the PSC, as was the creation of the kinds of spaces required if such delicate and complex issues are to be addressed productively.

It must be emphasised that the above cultural issues have not been introduced as justification for CGIAR non-responsiveness to the PSC, but rather to better situate the larger issues of context that were determinant factors in the evolution of the engagement over its eight years of existence and also of any prospects for the future. Certainly, the overwhelming perception of PSC members is not only that CGIAR engagement with and responses to PSC initiatives *could* have been better, but that it *must be* infinitely better for the partnership experiment to continue. Whether this can happen in ways that would be considered adequate by Private Sector members of the PSC is not at all self-evident. It would probably require significant modifications to CGIAR governance and management through the establishment of a kind of central policy body along the lines urged by the PSC. In this regard, it is instructive to recall that this was one of the principal recommendations of the Third System Review (TSR).

The TSR specifically urged the establishing of a centralised body with authority and responsibility to deal with IPR issues and public-private partnerships. As noted in the recent comprehensive World Bank evaluation of the CGIAR:

‘The 'corporate model' recommended by the Third System Review (TSR) to formalise decision-making, transparency, and accountability was rejected for being 'top down' and contrary to CGIAR's founding principles.....The recommendations on governance and management clashed with vested interests and with the CGIAR culture of consensus decision-making.....A subsequent 'Federation proposal' by the CGIAR Board Chairs and Centre Directors was opposed because it was 'bottom up' and would have increased Centre control at the expense of donors and the CGIAR Secretariat.....The CGIAR's founding principles are unsuited to ensuring poverty impacts in a changed environment'<sup>12</sup>.

As noted earlier, the PSC meeting of January 2003, aimed to inject new life into the PSC by establishing a pragmatic and output-based work programme. The meeting did move in that direction, although as also noted earlier, the result does not contain many of the elements of a work plan or a business plan. It does, however, represent a framework now agreed between the PSC and the CGIAR Secretariat and it is time-bound. It is to be hoped that this new framework will revitalise the work of the committee and the commitment of its membership and will find a much more responsive and receptive environment from the CG system as a whole. Should this not succeed, however, it would seem inevitable that interest and commitment would continue to decline as they did over the period 1998-2003. Members of the PSC were almost universal in indicating that they would re-join or continue to work on the Committee only if the CGIAR improves and strengthens interaction with the PSC at the level of individual Centres and on the basis of ‘genuinely functional partnerships’. This, in turn, probably depends on progress on at least some of system-wide governance and management changes that were recommended in the TSR. Given the history of that effort, the grounds for buoyant optimism are not immediately apparent.

---

<sup>12</sup> World Bank, 2003, **The CGIAR at 31: An Independent Meta-Evaluation of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research**, OED, World Bank, pp 17-18.

## PART FOUR OTHER PARTNERSHIP PERSPECTIVES

The previous two sections have focussed on analytical summaries of the main observations and conclusions obtained from past and present members of the NGOC and PSC committees through questionnaires and interviews. This section summarises the perspectives obtained from other key actors in the partnership experience, namely the Directors-General and Chairs of the Boards of the Centres, the co-sponsoring organisations, investors/funders and local partnership organisations (NARS).

There are two general observations that we consider important to the presentation and interpretation of this section:

- *First*, a problem that soon became apparent in questionnaire returns and follow-up interviews was that the extent of knowledge about the work of the two committees was highly variable. Many respondents indicated that they were, at best, only vaguely aware of the existence of the committees and, accordingly, could offer little in the way of judgements or perspectives on them. Others, especially the Centre D-Gs and Board Chairs and regular participants in the CGIAR Council, often indicated that they could not offer detailed commentary but were fully comfortable in communicating their general perspectives on the experience to date, its successes and failings, and views with regard to the future.
- *Second*, central perspectives on the partnership effort were highly variable. Even where there appeared to be broad agreement on essential facts, interpretations of these, and especially what they meant for the future, proved to be highly polarised. The main viewpoints expressed on the overall experience and its future may be summarised in the following box with direct quotations from interviews or questionnaires.

### Overall Assessments: Some General Classifications

- **Positive** – ‘The set up of the two panels is a very positive undertaking...Every effort should be made ...to maintain their participation’
- **Hopeful** – ‘[the committees] have not been as productive as I would have wished and I greatly regret what has happened with the non-governmental group, but there has been progress and we need to persevere.....This is an experiment and it needs to be given time.’
- **Neutral** – ‘The NGO committee left and it made no difference. If they return, it would make no difference. If the PSC were to follow, it would make no difference’.
- **Resignation** – ‘[They are] of no value to the CGIAR, but are a necessary evil, and political correctness requires that (they) should continue’.
- **The Committees are not comparable** – ‘The two committees from the start represented almost polar communities and viewpoints. The PSC was quite in tune with the.....CGIAR. In contrast, the NGO committee seemed almost totally out of place; they didn’t seem to have any sense for or interest in what the CGIAR was established to do’.
- **Disappointment** – ‘Progress was being made...mutual confidence was being built...[the NGOC freeze] has been a serious setback.....It is very disheartening’.
- **Negative** – ‘...quite simply, a total waste of time, energy and money’.

- **The Committees as a Microcosm for a Failing System** – ‘...[you] can’t take the relationship of two committees in isolation.....because the [overall system] is divisive.....The relationship between Centre Directors and the CG Secretariat is nefarious’.
- **Condemnation** – ‘They [the NGOC] do more damage than good. The CG is better off without them’.
- **Anger** – ‘They [the NGOC] think that a dialogue amounts to others listening to and agreeing fully with them....They have nothing of value to say about science and their behaviour is insulting’.

If the main goals of a partnership effort include – as was the case for the initiative launched at Lucerne – establishing common ground and shared perspectives, the variability of the above viewpoints suggest, at a minimum, that these have been seriously impeded by problems in communications. The extent of the variability, however, indicates that problems are much deeper and are unlikely to be rectified solely through an enhanced communications effort.

***Were the objectives important and realistic and what progress has been made?***

A possible explanation for the extent of this variability is suggested in responses to the questionnaire. Question 1 (see Annex) listed the *six* principal objectives that were assigned to or established by the PSC and question 10 listed the *three* principal objectives that the NGOC established for itself (i.e. a total of nine objectives). In both cases, respondents were asked to rate each objective according to a)- importance/relevance, b) -realism/achievability, and c)- progress to date. Responses were remarkably consistent<sup>13</sup> for both the PSC and the NGOC and were also consistent for all nine objectives. Almost all responses assigned a high to very high rating to importance/relevance; a low to medium rating to the realism/achievability of each objective; and a very low to low rating to progress to date. Results are summarised in the following two tables.

**PSC Objectives: Questionnaire Results**

| Objective                 | 1<br>Provision<br>Of Biotech | 2<br>Legal<br>Advice-<br>IPR | 3<br>Clearing<br>House | 4<br>Inventory | 5<br>Constit-<br>uency | 6<br>Dialogue | AVERAGE |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------|---------|
| Importance/<br>Relevance  | 4.5                          | 4.3                          | 4.2                    | 4.0            | 4.4                    | 4.5           | 4.32    |
| Realism/<br>Achievability | 3.0                          | 2.9                          | 3.0                    | 2.8            | 3.4                    | 3.8           | 3.15    |
| Progress to<br>Date       | 1.4                          | 1.2                          | 1.3                    | 1.2            | 1.2                    | 1.7           | 1.33    |

<sup>13</sup> For readers concerned with the statistical significance of this, the standard deviations in all cases were small.

## NGOC Objectives: Questionnaire Results

| Objective             | 1<br>People-Centred<br>Research | 2<br>Mutual<br>Understanding | 3<br>Two-Way<br>Communication | AVERAGE |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------|
| Importance/Relevance  | 3.9                             | 4.0                          | 4.2                           | 4.03    |
| Realism/Achievability | 3.1                             | 3.2                          | 3.1                           | 3.13    |
| Progress to Date      | 1.3                             | 1.2                          | 1.3                           | 1.27    |

The principal actors within the CGIAR system (its co-sponsors, contributors and the DG's and Board Chairs of individual Centres) appear, on the one hand, to see the key objectives of both committees as matters of exceptionally high (if not highest) priority for the CGIAR system but, on the other hand, to consider these same objectives as somewhat unrealistic and/or unattainable. While the questionnaire was constructed and intended as a rapid means to invite and obtain views and opinions and not as a purely statistically-based measure, the consistency and magnitude of the gaps that emerged between perceived importance of objectives and perceived realism of the same objectives is almost certainly statistically significant. There is also something of the paradoxical and even of the counter-intuitive in this result. The extent of this paradox notwithstanding, the most striking (and perhaps most discouraging) aspect of the above results is that progress should be rated so low after eight years of efforts<sup>14</sup>.

An additional factor seems worthy of note. When asked to specify benefits/advantages/successes and weaknesses/disadvantages/failures of both committees, the former tended to be expressed more in the future or conditional tenses and the latter in the present or past tenses. This is illustrated by a sample of direct quotations that appear in the following two boxes (underlining ours). It may be reasonable to assume, therefore, that those of more positive inclinations towards the work of the two committees tend to view them as a work in progress, that has potential and that could produce significant mutual benefits in the future. Indeed and as a possible reflection of this, one interviewee expressed his general conclusion as follows:

‘The Committees hold important potential for the CG.....This is the main factor .....It is an investment by the CG in its future...Whatever is decided, it should be on the basis of future considerations and not just because there have been growing pains...’

<sup>14</sup> For progress to date on the six PSC objectives, the distribution of all responses was: 109 very low, 87 low and 21 medium. For the three NGOC objectives it was: 129 very low, 71 low and 5 medium. These responses produced standard deviations, respectively, of 0.98 and 0.63.

## Perceptions Towards Private Sector Committee

### Main Benefits/Advantages/Successes

- ‘There should and can be advantages in this as an important opportunity to interact.’
- ‘A base has been established and we can now build on this.’
- ‘This will send a positive signal that the CG is not isolated.’
- ‘The committee will serve as an essential ‘reality check’ on thinking within the CGIAR on the private sector.’
- ‘If we persevere, there should be new opportunities for technology transfer.’
- ‘...The two panels (are) a very positive undertaking for the CGIAR system, as they represent important constituencies of this system.’
- ‘...Above all else, this is an opportunity for dialogue with the senior levels of private industry....the (PSC) ..is needed for this.’

### Main Weaknesses/Disadvantages/Failures

- ‘...With the benefit of hindsight, the main disadvantage has been that having an ‘advisory committee’ has (allowed us not to) resolve important issues between public and private sector research.’
- ‘The PSC has neither been able to represent private sector interests nor to resolve tensions.’
- ‘It (PSC) has produced no new financial support for the CGIAR.’
- ‘...a complete lack of substance.’
- ‘There have been no benefits at all. The biggest weakness is in allowing it to continue.’
- ‘The biggest weakness and failure is ours in the complete lack of insight and strategic thinking by the CG in setting it up and supporting it.’

## Perceptions Towards the Non-Governmental Organisations Committee

### Main Benefits/Advantages/Successes

- ‘... an opportunity for the CG to connect to grass roots – something we badly need.’
- ‘It could be an opportunity to increase NGO understanding of what the CGIAR can do and for the CGIAR to understand what NGOs can do.’
- ‘...a forum to open up communications between the CGIAR and NGOs.’
- ‘If we revive it, it has the potential for us to learn about the needs and desires of civil society through an honest dialogue.’
- ‘It has made a beginning in broadening the CG approach to partnerships. The potential is there to go much further.’

### Main Weaknesses/Disadvantages/Failures

- ‘It has been a complete waste of time.’
- ‘It adds nothing of scientific relevance.’
- ‘Their attitude is offensive, strident and mostly they are ill informed.’
- ‘They appear to have wished to alienate potential partners rather than seeking common ground.’
- ‘The NGOC’s unwillingness and intransigence to dialogue with the private sector.’
- ‘They claim to want ‘voices to be heard’ but they listen only to themselves.’
- ‘[the agenda was co-opted by] a small group of activists [that are not linked] to the large and diverse group of NGOs’.
- ‘The NGOC did nothing but push on maintaining old, outdated agendas.’
- ‘They are scientific Luddites.’
- ‘The transactions costs with [the NGOC] were astounding.’
- ‘There was no code of conduct. NGOs that participate in the CGIAR should adhere to a code of conduct, [agreed principles of] governance and legitimacy of representation.’
- ‘The main failure was in allowing both of them [i.e. the PSC and NGOC] to become members of Council.’



## **PART FIVE**

### **CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF CGIAR PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **5.1 Business As Usual is not an Option**

Whatever the future that may be decided for the two Committees – whether the PSC should continue, whether the NGOC should be revived, whether one or both should be completely transformed – the preceding analysis should leave no doubt that ‘business as usual’ is simply not an option. It should also be clear – again irrespective of what future should be determined for the Committees – that it would be overly simplistic and, indeed, quite wrong to attribute the frustrations and false starts that have characterised this experiment to bad faith on the part of one or several of the parties. Yet, as this evaluation has revealed, such attribution is already widespread. It may be most obvious in accusations of bad faith between some NGOC members and some others within the CGIAR system, but it is far from exclusive to those actors.

This is a major barrier to moving forward. Mistakes and misjudgements there have certainly been, but these need to be placed in perspective and, as we hope this evaluation has made clear, critical to that perspective is the recognition of the enormity of good faith accorded by all parties to the experiment. With the benefit of hindsight it should be clear to the CGIAR that it did itself and the Committees a significant disservice in not having thought through and communicated clearly just exactly what it wanted from (and did not want from) the Partnership Committees. Looking back over the past eight years, it should be clear with hindsight to members of both the NGOC and the PSC that the multilateral nature of the CGIAR means that it can function only by building and sustaining multiple constituencies with often vastly different interests and that, consequently, it is unable to reach major decisions quickly or in the ‘real time’ modality of the international Private Sector. Hindsight from the experience of the past eight years should also facilitate a wider appreciation that priorities for agricultural research to improve the human condition should be decided with reference both to the voices of poor farmers and to those who speak on behalf of the most sophisticated and advanced of biological sciences – not on the basis of one only or of one versus the other.

As the adage holds, however, hindsight always involves 20/20 vision. Part of the problem that has emerged in the partnership experiment is structural. The decision to establish the NGOC was once referred to by a leading spokesperson of international Civil Society as ‘integrated pest control’ and he may not have been far off the mark. The time of the special Ministerial meeting in Lucerne in 1995, was one of heightened tribulations between the international NGO community and multilateral organisations such as the World Bank and the CGIAR. The promise of a new deal for development and the environment that had been struck at the Rio Summit in 1992 was fast unravelling; the specific commitments to major increases in development financing together with new forms of co-responsibility between multilateral development agencies and Civil Society had failed to materialise; the ‘Washington Consensus’, symbolically attached to the World Bank and virulently opposed by much of Civil Society, was at its apex. In this climate, the pressures within the World Bank were to bend over backwards to accommodate Civil Society, especially its more vocal, advocacy components. At the same time, the CGIAR stood increasingly accused of having ‘lost the scientific script’ to new Private Sector advances in bio-engineering. These forces

strongly influenced the thinking on partnerships at Lucerne and invited the kind or open-ended, structurally undefined arrangements that emerged for the twin Committees.

This structure, as indicated earlier in this report, severely flawed the entire venture, for it brought into cohabitation widely different expectations and significantly differing institutional cultures without systematic discussion of how these would be harmonised, including where differences might indeed be irreconcilable and could not form the basis of a partnership. Nor was it ever sufficiently clear as to who represented whom, a fact that both committees themselves emphasised regularly. The perception that the NGOC did not include representatives of the very large NGOs with active field programmes in developing countries or mass-based farmer organisations was bound to exacerbate the structural defect.

A number of significant similarities have been detected in the evolution of the two committees. Following Lucerne, both committees were formed, met and launched work programmes with impressive speed. Both dealt with the uncertainties as to what they were to do and what was expected of them by taking proactive measures to formulate their own statements of purpose, objectives and *modus operandi*. Over seven years both made at least three attempts at reformulating and restructuring their mandates. Before the NGOC unilateral freeze, both had indicated a strong wish to reassess and clarify the purposes and objectives of the partnership relationship. And both, with perhaps a somewhat varying intensity, experienced and expressed sequential frustration with what they came to view as an essentially one-way relationship and non-responsiveness from the CGIAR system.

Although there were also differences in the approach and operational modalities of the committees, the main defining fact is that they have evolved into two very distinct positions. The PSC continues to operate, thanks to its new three year plan of work launched in London in January 2003, although it cannot be taken for granted that this will succeed in establishing the enduring relationship that proved elusive in prior efforts. If it does not, it would seem quite probable from the evidence gathered in this evaluation that the PSC would simply fade quietly away after 2006. By contrast, the NGOC-CGIAR relationship at the system level had become completely vitiated by the end of 2002 and has been moribund for over a year.

## **5.2 Is There a Will to Persevere With or Restore the Two Partnership Committees?**

This is a key question. The review of the history of both Committees has already indicated that it was essentially the extent of the goodwill that existed that permitted the experiment to endure through the frustrations and disappointments that were the central defining characteristics almost from the outset. The PSC demonstrates a continuing will to persevere, but it has also fixed that will within a time-bound work programme. NGOC members, as we have seen, are deeply divided. Some would clearly welcome an attempted resuscitation of the relationship, but for others the experiment is now a dead letter that should not be revived. From within the CGIAR system itself, the will to persevere with and/or revive the partnership committee experiment is also characterised by deep divisions. To oversimplify only slightly, this evaluation has revealed three entirely different viewpoints on the future of the two committees. One holds strongly that the partnership committee experiment as structured in 1995 has no saving features, has yielded no substantive value-added and should now be abandoned. A second does not dispute that benefits to date have been modest but concludes that perseverance along with major modifications will yet pay dividends. A third argues for continuance of the PSC but abandonment of the NGOC. Responses from non-committee

members to two questions in the questionnaire<sup>15</sup> (see following two boxes) help to illustrate the extent to which opinion appears to be divided on the future of the NGOC versus the PSC.

| <b>Questionnaire Statement: ‘The CGIAR simply must find the means to re-establish the functioning of the NGOC as this is imperative to the purposes and long-term health of the CGIAR system as a whole.’</b> |               |                        |                       |
|---|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Response</i>   | <i>Number</i> | <i>Assigned weight</i> | <i>Weighted Score</i> |
| Strongly agree  | <b>16</b>     | 5                      | 80                    |
| Agree   | <b>9</b>      | 4                      | 36                    |
| Neutral/no opinion  | <b>4</b>      | 3                      | 12                    |
| Disagree  | <b>19</b>     | 2                      | 38                    |
| Strongly disagree   | <b>14</b>     | 1                      | 14                    |
| <b>Weighted Average Score = 2.9</b>   |               |                        |                       |

| <b>Questionnaire Statement: ‘The CGIAR simply must find the means to ensure that the PSC functions well, as this is imperative to the purposes and long-term health of the CGIAR system as a whole.’</b> |               |                        |                       |
|--|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Response</i>  | <i>Number</i> | <i>Assigned Weight</i> | <i>Weighted Score</i> |
| Strongly Agree   | <b>15</b>     | 5                      | 75                    |
| Agree  | <b>21</b>     | 4                      | 84                    |
| Neutral/No Opinion   | <b>14</b>     | 3                      | 42                    |
| Disagree   | <b>5</b>      | 2                      | 10                    |
| Strongly Disagree  | <b>3</b>      | 1                      | 3                     |
| <b>Weighted Average Score= 3.69</b>  |               |                        |                       |

It is noteworthy from these tables that slightly over 50% of respondents did not think that a strong NGOC was imperative for the future of the CGIAR, while less than 13% held the same view for the PSC. This indicates that an accepted and credible future for the NGOC will be harder to achieve than for the PCS. Yet the same figures also suggest that, whatever the difficulties and frustrations to date, there is a widely held view that the long-term health of the CGIAR system will depend on productive and durable partnerships (63% of respondents agree at the CGIAR must find the means to make the PSC function well, and less than 14% demurred from this view). The above results also demonstrate that there is both a higher level of uncertainty and of divisiveness with regard to the NGOC (roughly 40% agree that a functioning NGOC is imperative to the health of the CGIAR and an almost identical percentage disagree). Clearly, the frustration and anger of NGOC members towards the CGIAR (as summarised in Part 2 of this paper) are matched by equally strong feelings of frustration and anger towards the NGOC from within the CG system.

The current efforts of the PSC may succeed in defining the way forward for the role and functions of that committee. The more probable scenario, however, would suggest that the PSC will need more than its own efforts to achieve this result. It will also require a much greater clarity as to exactly what the CGIAR, both as a system and with regard to its main components, seeks from, and the limits on what it is able to give to and able to receive from the partnership. For partnerships as a whole, the extent of divisions and the variability of will

<sup>15</sup> Numbers vary slightly as some respondents did not answer all questions.

with regard to the future of the partnership experiment as set up at Lucerne will depend on that greater clarity.

### 5.3 What Are the Characteristics of the Partnerships Being Sought?

Over the past decade, the idea of 'partnerships' has increasingly become an indispensable element of international development discourse. The prevailing view is that partnerships of all kinds are essential to improve development effectiveness by increasing 'voice', efficiency, ownership, by reducing costs and competition for the same price and product markets and by 'achieving synergies'.

But the term 'partnership' is vague and problematic, perhaps especially so in the discourse of international development. Partnership objectives can range from information sharing and 'getting to know each other better', to learning about how two parties might work together', to specific actions of an interdependent nature that assign responsibilities and accountabilities to two or more parties. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) uses the word partnership to refer to an agreement on a 'shared orientation or framework' for the provision of a particular public good or service as well as for any arrangement in which public and private sectors and government and Civil Society organisations cooperate in some way or other to exchange lessons learnt and best practice, harmonise practice and standards and share information. It is self-evident from such a broad definition that institutional partnerships in development cooperation take on various forms and operational mechanisms. Also, implicit in the DAC definition is a vast variability of relationships that would need to be nurtured and developed differently according to the purpose of the partnership and the degree of urgency to respond to a particular need. Also implicit in this is that different types of partnerships are dependent upon different levels of trust, organisational cultures, target clienteles/areas, or commonalities of mandate.

Simply stated, the intensity of requirements for a successful partnership varies with the purpose and type of partnership being sought. The following offers a rough typology of partnerships in terms of the depth and intensity of arrangements required for five different types of partnerships, defined as follows:

- ***Consultative partnership.*** This exists among institutions which wish to establish new relations with other organisations for information exchange. Regular venues such as consultations or dialogues are organised to serve as initial mechanisms through which various institutions get to know each other by sharing experiences, ideas, and opinions.
- ***Coordinative partnership.*** Efforts are exerted to avoid duplication of activities and synchronise separate institutional initiatives for greater efficiency and effectiveness in field operations. As a starting point for coordination, interagency committees and activities are usually organised to do a checklist or inventory of project interventions in the communities. An example is the relief efforts undertaken by government and NGOs where an interagency group is organised to avoid duplication in the distribution of goods to earthquake victims.
- ***Complementary partnership.*** In this form or level of relationship, though each party has separate initiatives, they are both guided by a common programme framework characterised by purposive efforts to support each other.

- ***Collaborative partnership.*** In this relationship, both institutions agree to work together, sharing a common vision, establishing common objectives, and plans of action on a programme level. Mechanisms are institutionalised so as to facilitate delivery of services to their target communities. (for example: sector-wide approaches)
- ***Critical partnership.*** This may be the highest form and level of partnership where both institutions consider each other as indispensable partners in pursuing broad development goals and visions. Both sectors work together on a more strategic long-term arrangement on various aspects of the socioeconomic and political life of the community. NGOs, for example, are given access to government resources and are also given the chance to participate in the policy formulation and decision-making processes.

**TABLE 1**  
**Levels of Institutional Partnerships**

| Nature of partnership            | Description   | Objective  | Indicators   | Possible areas for partnership  | Key requirements  |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Consultative partnership</b>  | Sharing of knowledge/information/technologies through agreement on lines/forms of communication                                       | Information exchange<br>Awareness building                           | Regular venues and/or systemic structures for information exchange                 | Seminars, workshops, consultations, newsletters, electronic connectivity                    | Openness<br>Participatory   |
| <b>Coordinative partnership</b>  | Separate initiatives not necessarily supportive of each other yet aspiring to complementarity to achieve efficiency and effectiveness | Avoidance of duplication<br>Synchronisation of activities            | Interagency committees and activities<br>Agreement on norms to guide mutual review | Awareness Campaigns<br><i>Ad hoc</i> committees on country, sectoral or scientific concerns | Openness<br>Regular and sustained efforts<br>Representative arrangements  |
| <b>Complementary partnership</b> | Separate initiatives but guided by a common framework characterized by purposive efforts to support each other                        | Integrated program approaches<br>Resource sharing                    | Programmes that can achieve objectives only if others achieve theirs               | Public-private MOUs on technology production and distribution                               | Mutual trust<br>Established complementarity of interests<br>Leadership support<br>Participatory                                       |
| <b>Collaborative partnership</b> | Joint efforts with a common vision and objectives   | Joint programmes<br>Policymaking                                     | Long-term joint programmes<br>Institutionalized mechanisms                         | Integrated area development<br>Policy formulation<br>Decision making In national bodies     | Mutual trust<br>Shared vision<br>Congruence in strategy<br>Leadership<br>Participatory<br>Clear delineation of tasks/responsibilities |
| <b>Critical partnership</b>      | Interdependence<br>Recognition of each other as indispensable partners in the development process                                     | Joint strategic planning, shared decision-making, and implementation | Long-term and Institutionalized working relations                                  | All undertakings  | All of the above plus longer-term, codified 'voting' or decision-making regime  |

*Source* Adapted from FAO, 1994, Peoples Participation Programme in Rural Development in the Philippines. FAO's Partnership with NGOs in Project Formulation, People's Participation, FAO, Rome

I  
N  
T  
E  
R  
N  
S  
I  
T  
Y  
O  
F  
P  
A  
R  
T  
N  
E  
R  
S  
H  
I  
P  
A  
R  
R  
A  
N  
G  
E  
M  
E  
N  
T



Applying the above typology to the experience of the two CGIAR Committees since their establishment in 1995, it would seem reasonable to conclude that many of the difficulties encountered arose from the fact that different actors at different stages had in mind very different types of partnership. The NGOC, for example would seem from the outset to have inclined much more strongly than the PSC to a view of the relationship as a 'critical partnership', whereas the PSC inclined more strongly to an arrangement more closely approximating a 'complementary partnership'. Within the CGIAR itself, the view as to which type or even types of partnership(s) appears to have been either mixed across the system as a whole or simply unclear and undecided. Whatever the case, ***an important point of departure for the future would be for the CGIAR system to reflect on the general nature of the partnerships being sought and to communicate clearly the results of such thinking to all relevant parties.***

#### **5.4 What Guidance does Empirical Evidence provide on Public-private Partnerships?**

The simple answer is not very much. There are a range of case studies that are instructive and helpful (we will turn to these shortly), but there has been very little in the way of systematic empirical study on which to draw. The systemic conceptual and empirical work that is available has generally been focussed on partnerships for the environment and has aimed to present 'win-win or double-bottom-line success stories'. Since the Earth Summit of 1992 at Rio, this idea of a double-bottom-line has become a central feature of the literature on public-private cooperation and to partnerships between international development organisations and industry.

The beguilingly simple concept of vast win-win gains from public-private partnerships originated at least to some degree in academia and gained legitimacy through Professor Michael Porter, a leading guru of American business schools. Porter (see 'America's Green Strategy', *Scientific American*, April 1991; and Porter and van der Linde 'Green and Competitive, Ending the Stalemate', *Harvard Business Review*, September, 1995) drew on a quite limited number of studies involving different partnerships between public (mainly regulation, norm- and standard-setting) and private (mainly investments in products or processes) actors in the recycling of waste, energy conservation and new technologies that were 'clean' and more energy efficient than earlier generations of the same technology. Porter's conclusion (which came to be known as the 'Porter hypothesis') was that environmental regulation, far from damaging competitiveness, enhanced it by stimulating innovation. This double-bottom-line formulation became the foundation stone of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and of the emphasis that has grown over the past decade on public-private collaboration in international development efforts. Indeed, it is probably no exaggeration to state that for official international development organisations demonstrating that public-private partnerships are being 'mainstreamed' has become a matter of 'political correctness'.

The propensity for fads as the basis of priority-setting in international development is a well established fact and the danger in the current emphasis on public-private partnerships is that these become more ends in themselves than carefully considered and well-justified means to enhanced development effectiveness.

*The CG system should be aware of this danger and take into account that the simplified win-win, double dividend proposition is deeply flawed, as is shown by even the limited case study literature* on public-private partnerships on the environment. Businesses are not at all homogeneous. Some studies provide solid evidence of important cost-savings for firms through environmental investments. The evidence, however, is that they do not represent the norm for individual companies. In many instances, the substantial savings realised from waste minimising initiatives or programmes aimed at improving resource productivity and reducing pollution are insignificant when placed against a company's overall level of environmental spending and investment. One study (see Stavens, 'Environmental Regulation and the Competitiveness of United States Manufacturing: What Does the Evidence tell Us,' Journal of Economic Literature, 1995), for example, reports on a survey of over 100 academic and governmental studies. Its conclusion is that 'not a single empirical analysis lends convincing support to the view that environmental regulation stimulates innovation and competitiveness'.

The limited empirical evidence on public-private partnerships also suggests that sustained successes are constrained by several key factors. First and foremost, the public and private sectors face different incentives and different cost structures that affect their willingness and ability to enter into partnerships. Second, the public and private sectors hold preconceived opinions and perceptions of each other that often hinder cooperation. Third, cooperation and competition are inadequately managed between partners, particularly with respect to the production and use of scientific knowledge and technology. Finally, public-private partnership is hindered by the general absence of guidelines and working models for public-private partnership.

### **5.5 Can New Approaches in Providing International (or Global) Public Goods Assist the CGIAR in Building Partnerships?**

Many of the respondents to this evaluation underscored the fact that the CGIAR is about as pure a public good as you can get at the global level. They also urged that attempts at partnerships should be predicated on arrangements to 'keep it exclusively in the public domain' and that would maximise the global public good nature of the CG system. This view derived not only from several NGOC members (who argued essentially that CG partnerships with the international Private Sector were antithetical to the global public nature of the CGIAR), but was widespread across the PSC and the Centres.

The question then arises as to whether the recent emphasis on global public goods (GPGs) might offer helpful counsel to the CG system in structuring partnerships with the Private Sector and with Civil Society. Unfortunately, the answer to this question is not immediately apparent, notwithstanding the fact that the enthusiasm of at least several international development agencies is such that they have announced GPGs as the new frame of reference for official development assistance and as a means to revitalise the political commitment to aid.

There is disagreement on the value and potential of a GPG approach to addressing global concerns. The expressions of enthusiasm from one side are met with expressions of concern on the other. Indeed, some scholars and policy-makers are alarmed about claims made in the name of global goods and about what they view as the 'fuzziness' of the concept of a GPG, especially when inscribed into policy processes. A recent illustration of the extent of



fuzziness in invoking the term GPG is seen in the claim that: 'The means to preserve the conditions for a globally sustainable development for each individual and its community must be regarded as global public goods, independently of whether the source of production and the reach of effect is local, national or global' (Banca Etica, 2001). From this perspective, there is little that would not qualify as a GPG and that would not be a matter requiring some type of global governance arrangement.

The extrapolation of the rather precise concept of 'public good' from economics to broader contexts, specifically those in which development policies and interventions take place, requires considerable conceptual stretching. But this is a fast-evolving area of intellectual and policy effort and it would appear to hold considerable potential as a guide to future CGIAR partnerships. There have recently been, and are currently underway, a range of studies aimed at introducing greater conceptual clarity into this situation. These studies involve classification schemes that categorise public goods along the three dimensions of range of spill-overs, degree of excludability and degree of rivalry, and also along other dimensions such as sector, aggregation technology, type of benefit and whether the public goods are tangible or intangible.

Of more immediate importance and relevance to the CGIAR is the clarity with which these studies have demonstrated that partnerships must be carefully, deliberately and patiently structured to the particular good, service or outcome that is deemed as desirable and also that explicit rules (regimes) that define roles, boundaries and the rules of governance are imperative to the prospects for success. These factors, as we have seen, were entirely absent from the Partnership Committee structures established by the CGIAR at Lucerne. The obvious conclusion from the emerging literature on GPGs is that these factors now require specific attention in thinking about how to take the partnership experiment forward.

Moreover, greater conceptual clarity on the global public good nature of the CGIAR may serve as a helpful guide to improved role definition and division of labour issues. The fact that any commodity, resource or service has to be ultimately produced, utilised or provided by some individual or agent in a specific location means that it is necessary to specify how far down the continuum from global to local to draw the line between what is a GPG and the host of regional, national and local activities and policies that are necessary for it to materialise. There is also the need to specify the extent to which supranational entities, such as the CGIAR, are supposed to arrange for the provision of the GPG, and to what extent should they intervene in regional, national or even local affairs to ensure this happens.

A highly topical example may be taken from current debates about the provision of HIV/AIDS retroviral treatment for infected persons. Clearly, no reasonable individual would question as a desirable outcome the provision of adequate treatment to persons infected with HIV/AIDS. There is, however, considerable disagreement on the extent to which such treatment should be approached on the basis of considering it a GPG. One school of thinking holds that the GPG component involves the knowledge about how to produce treatment drugs or vaccines, and that the GPG challenge is to ensure that such knowledge is made available at low or no cost to those countries and firms that can produce it for local consumption, and even for export to other developing countries. A second school goes much further by proposing the actual delivery of the drugs to infected persons as a GPG. This second school would not necessarily require disclosure of the knowledge for drug or vaccine production, but would require in the name of GPGs the putting in place of all the arrangements required for purchasing, distributing and administering treatment drugs to all infected persons. There is a

third, although less acknowledged, school that argues that, however terrible and devastating the disease may be, this is simply not a global problem, that there are other health priorities for developing countries, and that these concerns are primarily local and national and do not qualify for the label of a GPG.

A further topical example can be found in concerns with the conservation of biodiversity. Because of its importance for evolutionary resilience, the provision of ecosystem services and the potential for leading to new drugs and other useful products, biodiversity conservation is claimed as a GPG that also requires global governance arrangements. Biodiversity, however, is a highly localised phenomenon, with a few 'biodiversity hotspots' accounting for a very large share of the diversity of living organisms in the planet. Countries where such sources of abundant biodiversity are located could well argue (and they do) that it is up to them to use this natural resource as they see fit. Since its inception, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has been confronting the issue of which proportion of biodiversity conservation projects should be financed through its grants, and which part should be covered by national or local organisations (or by development assistance). The difficulties involved in drawing a precise distinction are enormous and, after a decade of experience, the GEF continues with efforts to refine its definition of what are called 'incremental costs'. This concept is used to identify those aspects of a biodiversity project that generate global benefits, and are thus eligible for GEF funding, separating them from the financing of activities that produce primarily local and national benefits.

Thus, the difficulties associated with and inherent in the notion of GPGs are formidable. The lack of precision, the absence of conceptual clarity and the inattention to how such goods are to be provided and financed establish the possibility that the concept itself could be discredited as a feature of public policy. This would be a pity, for ***GPG approaches hold considerable potential to address global common concerns and to introduce greater consensus into debates on bioscience, human security and international development, and on the roles that can be played by multilateral bodies like the CG, national governments, Civil Society and private corporations.*** By focussing attention on the limitations of current political, legal, institutional and financial arrangements for addressing global problems, the GPG approach has already made an important contribution. For CGIAR policy-makers, the current situation of the CG system and the undeniable importance of effective partnerships should make all the more urgent the need for a conceptual framework that integrates the key factors affecting the definition, delivery and consumption of GPGs. Viewed positively, the potential payoffs from such a framework could be seen in better and more effective CGIAR policies to address common concerns. Viewed negatively, the lack of conceptual clarity could lead to misguided policies and practices and involve high opportunity costs<sup>16</sup>.

## **5.6 Can Lessons be Learned and Guidance Provided to the CGIAR from the Partnership Experiences of Others?**

The answer to this question is undeniably yes. Notwithstanding the lack of systematic empirical research on partnerships, a range of case studies does exist and the extent of recent efforts in international development partnerships between public, private and Civil Society entities provide instructive, albeit often anecdotal, experiences from which to draw. Some

---

<sup>16</sup> A more detailed examination of this subject may be found in Sagasti, Francisco, and Keith Bezanson, 2001, **Financing and Providing Global Public Goods: Expectations and Prospects**, MFA, Stockholm, Sweden.

involve efforts that have much in common with the main purposes and general orientation of the CGIAR partnership committees (e.g. African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) and the Group for Agricultural Research (GFAR)) and these obviously require careful and immediate scrutiny in the interests of an effective division of labour and the avoidance of costly overlap and duplication of effort. Other public-private and public-Civil Society and private-Civil Society partnerships would also appear to hold valuable lessons for the CGIAR, at both the system level and with regard to individual Centres, as it seeks to build (and/or re-build) its partnerships. It is well beyond the remit of and resources available to this evaluation to suggest anything in the way of a systematic assessment of such lessons and guidance. These limitations notwithstanding, our discussions and interviews with a range of organisations and institutions<sup>17</sup> experienced in global partnerships involving public, private and Civil Society actors indicated broad consensus on a number of points, as follows:

- ***There has been too much emphasis on partnerships as ends in themselves*** and too little recognition that partnerships can create burdensome transactions costs. Partnerships can be cost-ineffective just as they can be cost-effective.
- Recent partnerships in international development demonstrate a tendency to be driven by relatively non-specific notions such as 'inclusiveness', 'participation', and 'voice'. Such notions may be of the highest order of importance, but they have tended to divert attention away from the painstaking detail required for successful partnerships. As the old adage holds, ***the devil is in the detail and the detail requires specification of clear objectives and agreement on the respective comparative advantage of the parties to partnership agreements*** and efforts<sup>18</sup>.
- ***There are major issues and problems of asymmetry of power, influence, capabilities, experience and credibility***, but these are seldom dealt with directly and transparently. The result has been that international development partnerships often create the patina of an equality that simply does not exist and that serves to generate disappointment, frustration and resentment. This patina of equality can be especially bewildering to the Private Sector whose 'business culture' tends to articulate such asymmetries at the outset of any partnership and to regularise or regulate these via specific legal and financial instruments. The dominant international development paradigm of a 'universalism of partnerships of equals' may be noble in its intent but it avoids dealing with essential realities and, as such, requires modification to meet the needs of every specific application.
- ***Constituency committees are probably not the most productive way of engaging with either Civil Society or the Private Sector***. The parties they are intended to represent are important, but their importance is a function of different stages, locations and times in the continuum. There are major, if not insurmountable, problems of representativeness (as have been very apparent in the Partnership Committees of the CGIAR). There is also the danger that small committees get captured by individual views and become frustrated because they feel unable to influence larger policy agendas.
- ***As a basic rule, generic partnership arrangements should be avoided***. Partnerships should be specific to function and objective and should be entered into only on the basis of *ex ante* utilitarian agreements bounded by specific rules and agreed divisions

<sup>17</sup> The organisations included the World Bank, UNICEF, GEF, IIED, UNDP, Rockefeller Foundation,

<sup>18</sup> See World Bank, 2003, '**Toward Country-Led Development: A Multi-Partner Evaluation of the CDF**', World Bank, Operational Evaluation Department, No. 233.

of labour. This basic rule is cited by UNICEF as the key ingredient to the successes of its many partnership experiences. For example, UNICEF's evaluation of its partnership with the International Association of Paediatricians for low-cost delivery of child health emphasises that an agreement on general purposes may have been a useful first step but that 'development effectiveness' and 'value-added' depended on functional division of labour agreements for 'specific activities by specific actors in specific places at specific times'<sup>19</sup>.

- ***Especially where institutions with major differences in 'cultural perspectives and traditions' are involved, the front-ended investments required may extend over several years*** in order to establish the specific bases for partnership. These investments may require several years of effort antecedent to the signing of any agreements (if indeed agreements are possible). For example, the environmental management partnership in Australia between a major non-governmental organisation (the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)) and the transnational mining enterprise (Rio Tinto) was agreed only after approximately four years of prior discussion and negotiation in order to establish a mutually-agreeable framework<sup>20</sup>. According to Rio Tinto, its successful partnerships with Civil Society and multilateral organisations have depended on:
  - *ex ante* agreement on specific outcomes and on how these are to be measured;
  - time bound agreements that include stipulation of mutual responsibilities, a work plan and an agreed exit strategy.

Even following such efforts, it needs to be borne in mind that the resulting partnerships can still be fraught with tensions, given the continuous requirement for Civil Society organisations to justify their partnerships to their own diverse and often divided constituencies.

Similarly, the extensive partnership arrangements of the World Resources Institute (WRI) on transportation systems and preparing for climate change in the United States involve collaborative arrangements with organisations such as Shell Oil and General Motors. The partnership agreements for these were entered into only following clear agreement on the factors summarised in the following box.

**Preconditions to Partnership: World Resources Institute<sup>21</sup>**

- Establishment of/agreement on 'coincidence of objectives'.
- Stipulation and agreement on specific purposes.
- Specification of 'end points', milestones and framework for ongoing evaluation.
- Inclusion of exit strategies.
- Where finances are part of a partnership, advance understandings on resource allocations, accountability and management standards.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Kul C. Gautam, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF, August 24, 2003.

<sup>20</sup> A helpful outline of Rio Tinto experiences in partnerships with international and non-governmental organisations is provided in *The Rio Tinto Biodiversity Partnership Programme*, World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa, September 8-17, 2003, mimeo, Rio Tinto.

<sup>21</sup> Summarised from interview with Jonathan Lash, President, World Resources Institute, Washington DC., September 27, 2003. See also **'Decisions for the Earth: Balance, Voice and Power'**, World Resources Institute, Washington DC, June, 2003.

• ***Evaluation criteria, standards and timing should be integral to partnership agreements.***

As already indicated above, these factors are considered essential by organisations as diverse as the World Resources Institute, UNICEF, Rio Tinto and the World Bank. In fact, this is a 'best practice' standard for 'development effectiveness' that is now being adopted across the entire international development system and as a strategic imperative for United Nations development agencies<sup>22</sup>.

## **5.7 Some Further Recommendations of Possible Next Steps**

Our review of public-private-Civil Society partnerships in general and of the CGIAR's experience since 1995 with its two Partnership Committees demonstrates four facts:

- First, while partnerships have become one of the central mantras in the theory and practice of international development, they almost invariably raise complex and difficult problems of asymmetry, whether of power, influence, experience, capabilities or of culture, preferences, values and biases. While there is little in the way of systematic, empirical study, the recent emphasis on partnerships between a diverse range of development actors has produced a great deal of important learning about the requirements and conditions for success and value-added.
- Second, partnerships between the CG system, the Private Sector and Civil Society probably entail special challenges and requirements as a consequence of:
  - The diffuse nature of CGIAR governance and decision-making which restricts and even obviates requirements for formalised, collective decision-making and 'system accountability'.
  - The constant need for the CG system to balance and reconcile the complex and conflicting array of interests and preferences that make up the multiple constituencies of the CGIAR.
  - The highly charged emotional environment that has emerged on all aspects of biogenetics and the ownership of technologies, especially with regard to the food chain.
- Third, the Civil Society and constituencies that the two Committees are intended to represent are important, but their importance is a function of different stages, locations and times in the continuum and there are major, if not insurmountable, problems of representativeness.
- Fourth and most importantly, the devil is in the details and the details required for functional and mutually-beneficial partnerships between the CGIAR system, the Private Sector and Civil Society are formidable, especially if these aim to produce partnerships with either 'collaborative' or 'critical' characteristics (see Page 44). They include the fact that, while the abstract idea of partnerships meets with general enthusiasm, successful implementation almost always requires changes and major adjustments to the established behavioural patterns of the partnership parties and these

---

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, OECD-DAC, 1999, *Managing Accountability in Intergovernmental Partnerships*, PUMA/Rd(99)4/Final, Paris; UN, 2002, *Medium-Term Plan for the Period 2002-2005*, General Assembly, Supplement No. 6 A/55/6/Rev.1, New York; and UNDP, 2002, *Development Effectiveness Report 2001-2002*, New York.

unavoidably present barriers and produce opposition. Some opposition is a matter of groups who have vested interests, which include holding power and authority or traditions and even deep belief systems, which would be affected by partnership changes. We know that opposition is also very often due to misunderstandings as to what is intended and why.

Because of this, partnership strategies (beyond those required for either ‘consultative’ or ‘coordinative’ partnerships – see Pages 44 and 45) and the reforms they require are not just technical matters. Rather, they entail changes in mindsets and highly complex processes of political economy and of political accountability, and such processes can only be successful if they include significant efforts to explain, communicate, disseminate, consult, persuade and build consensus. The very nature of higher order partnerships is one of ‘distributed power’, where knowledge and technologies empower scientists, communities, workers, institutions, governments and so on. It is not merely a matter of such groups understanding the main forces and trends affecting them and why these require that they themselves change. It is also essential for individuals, firms, institutions and government to appreciate what they will have to do and why.

Such processes involve risks and dangers. A paralysis of inaction can be produced by the complexity of the issues and the extent to which opposition can become organised and vocal as a direct consequence of a consultation process. Also, the processes of consultation, persuasion and consensus-building can become burdensome, debilitating and can serve to delay dangerously the taking and implementing of essential decisions. This increases further the imperatives of an implementation strategy that includes monitoring, evaluation of progress and impact, and the agility to make constant and ongoing adjustments based on feedback.

These four facts configure the enormity of the challenges confronted by the CGIAR system in pursuing its aim to build strong and enduring partnerships with Civil Society and the Private Sector. In many instances, it is entirely possible that the higher order partnerships as set out in our typology (i.e. Collaborative Partnerships of Critical Partnerships requiring distributed power and joint decision-making) may not be appropriate to CGIAR activities. It is entirely possible that some strategic and programmatic choices and conduct of activities are best left in the hands of public sector scientific professionals. We are not in a position to make such judgements. As the evaluation has demonstrated, however, it seems imperative that the CGIAR should make its own very careful and considered judgements on these issues and the types and purposes of partnerships it seeks. In this regard, the constituency committee model that emerged from the Special Ministerial Meeting in Lucerne in 1995 may prove to be quite inappropriate. Interestingly also in this regard, the 2002 work plan of the PSC seems, for all practical intents and purposes, seems to define the committee less on a constituency representative model but on the basis of a complementary partnerships model.

In terms of next steps, therefore:

1. ***We recommend that the CGIAR commission an independent survey of its existing and previous relationships on the ground with Farmers’ Groups, NGOs and other Civil Society actors.*** This should aim to capture the benefits and costs, the appropriateness of arrangements at different levels (i.e. locally, nationally, regionally), the lessons learned (including issues of scale), the opportunities for scaling up, and the comparative advantages (and disadvantages) of different

experiences and kinds of relationships. This needs to be done with rigour, care and patience with a view to achieving a fair and adequate reflection of viewpoints from the other actors as well as within the CGIAR Centres. The results should be published and disseminated as widely as possible as a basis for CG discourse with Farmers' Groups, agricultural groupings, anti-poverty associations, NARS and other interested parties. The outcome of this should be used as an essential basis for decisions on the structure and characteristics of future CG partnerships with Civil Society.

2. ***We further recommend a careful examination of other partnership initiatives in international agricultural research in order to determine where these efforts are or could be better made complementary to the interests of the CG system.*** This should preferably be done on a fully independent basis, possibly by the newly-installed Science Council of the CGIAR. In particular, we suggest that such attention should focus on the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR)<sup>23</sup> and the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF)<sup>24</sup>. Whether or not there is costly overlap and duplication between these two institutions and the Partnership Committees of the CGIAR is beyond the remit of this evaluation. Nevertheless, in the conduct of this evaluation several interviewees pointed to GFAR and/or AATF as substitutes to or alternatives for the partnership committees. For this reason, it would seem appropriate and timely to carry out the further examination that we have suggested.
3. ***Following from this, an essential and pragmatic requirement is for the CG system to focus with clarity on what kind(s) of partnership(s) it seeks, on the costs, benefits and trade-offs required, on the organisational, managerial, governance and financial implications, and on the 'rules of engagement' that it regards as de minimus to its interests, mission, requirements and core competencies.*** In doing so, the CG system can benefit from the many lessons to be learned from the Partnership Committees' experience to date as well as from the experiences of others. We hope that this evaluation may serve to facilitate and aid such a careful and focussed examination.

---

<sup>23</sup> GFAR was established in 1996, approximately one year after the CGIAR Partnership Committees. It is itself a partnership organisation, comprising representatives of the national agricultural research systems in developing countries (NARS), advanced research institutions (ARIs), regional and sub-regional organisations, universities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), farmers' organisations, the Private Sector, international agricultural research centres (IARCs) mostly belonging to the CGIAR, and the donor community. Its principal aims are 'to bring together the comparative advantages of all these entities in the research and development process, ...to provide a Forum for addressing issues of global concern, where the participation of a broad and very diverse set of actors is required.' (See <http://www.egfar.org/home.shtml>).

<sup>24</sup> Pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation, the AATF is a recent innovation, having commenced operations in mid-2002. Interestingly, its establishment was preceded by over two years of consultations with several hundred African, North American and European stakeholders which aimed to establish agreed objectives and principles and an operational model for the AATF in addressing food security and poverty reduction challenges. Stakeholders were asked what they needed and what they could contribute to food security and poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa. They were asked about the problems of accessing technologies and delivering those technologies. Based on these consultations, the underlying principles and mission, and an operational model for the AATF were defined.

4. It is obvious, however, that this will not be a simple task, for, as this evaluation has revealed, within the CG system there are significant differences in receptivity to and even conflicts over partnerships. As we have also seen, the CGIAR does not have a centralised body with the necessary authority and responsibility to take decisions and to speak on behalf of the entire system. We concur with the observation in the recent meta-evaluation conducted by the World Bank that the recommendations made in the Third System Review ‘on governance and management clashed with vested interests and with the CGIAR culture of consensus decision-making<sup>25c</sup>. The System Office that is being established within the Change Design and Management Process (CDMP) should help matters, but as the World Bank report also notes: ‘...it does not yet go far enough<sup>26</sup> ‘and could not be expected to deal, for example, with the system’s need for IPR capacity.

These difficulties, however, should not prevent a long-overdue and well-focussed discussion of partnership strategy and issues between Centres Directors-General and the CG Secretariat. Our view is that such a *discussion could be especially fruitful if it were structured on the basis of the results of the survey referred to above in a one-day roundtable organised by a carefully chosen and capable facilitator and involving only the Directors-General and the CG Chair and Director*. Such an arrangement should encourage candour, an unencumbered focus on key issues, biases and preferences, and the delineation of areas of both solid agreement and disagreement.

5. *With regard to the NGOC, it would appear preferable that the unilaterally imposed freeze should remain in place*, at least until the previous two steps have been completed. The current relationship, as we have noted, is seriously damaged and cannot be repaired in the absence of a new, constructive and clear basis for discourse. The steps referred to above with regard to the CG System can contribute as essential components to the establishment of such a new base. This, however, is unlikely to be enough to re-establish mutual confidence, justify the removal of the freeze and place the CGIAR-NGOC relationship on a solid foundation. Additional steps will also be essential on the part of affected and interested parties in Civil Society.
6. *In parallel with the steps suggested to the CG System, we would recommend that past and present members of the NGOC should also take a fresh look at and define its own partnership expectations, requirements and boundary conditions*. As part of this, the NGOC (or alternatively a larger Civil Society grouping that would include some representatives of Farmers’ Organisations) might establish an internal consultative commission to examine openly and non-ideologically issues and perspectives on, say, how the precautionary principle might be operationalised with regard to GMOs and IPRs. It might be especially important that such an exercise focus – at least initially – less at the system level and more on the programmes and projects of individual Centres and on specific measures and arrangements for functional cooperation and collaboration between the centres and Civil Society in the application of the precautionary principle. Approaches such as these could help to catalyse attention away from generalities and abstractions and towards the specifics of and functional requirements for partnerships. In doing so, it would be hoped that such approaches would also open up new spaces for exchange on the nature and boundary

---

<sup>25</sup> World Bank, 2003, **The CGIAR at 31**, op.cit. pg. 17

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, pg. 13.



conditions for any future constituency-based approaches to partnerships. As part of this and/or antecedent to it, there is every reason to continue the numerous and apparently<sup>27</sup> successful partnerships between individual Centres and Civil Society and to enter into new ones as appropriate.

7. In the same vein, when the NGOC announced its unilateral freeze, it indicated its intention to conduct its own review of the partnership committee experience. To the best of our knowledge that has not yet been done, but we would encourage the NGOC to do so. The approaches indicated above would be an integral part of such a review.

As we have seen, however, the divisions within the NGO community on such issues as IPR and GMO are both horizontal and vertical. The horizontal split may be easier to handle - by stimulating more joint work at the level of individual Centres. An important collateral benefit to this should be an enlargement of constituencies within countries and regions for specific forms of operational partnerships. For the CGIAR, it might also be expected that this would help to expand the functional outreach for the CG System at the local and national level.

These steps, however, would not deal frontally with the 'big issues' or large ideological divisions which are the principal sources of the tensions and stress. If these are not also resolved and a framework of mutual trust established on these issues between the CG System, Civil Society and the Private Sector, it is difficult to see how longer-term, stable partnerships can be secured. The incremental approach may offer building blocks that could contribute to establishing multiple spaces for discourse on the larger issues and for exchanges not of the zero-sum-game variety, but this approach will not deal directly (or even necessarily at all) with the larger vertical divisions of a more ideological nature. The results of this evaluation would suggest that it would be misleading to suggest that this could easily be done. For example, some CGIAR agricultural scientists almost certainly believe that GMO issues should be left essentially in the purview of the scientists themselves, whereas there are those in Civil Society who view all forms of GMO as irretrievably pernicious. Some of the most senior members of both the CG System and the multinational Private Sector hold it to be axiomatic that extensive and deep public-private partnerships are beneficial and essential, while others, most notably in Civil Society, hold it to be equally axiomatic that such arrangements are inimical to the interests of poor people and especially to smallholder farmers.

With regard to larger ideological-type divisions, therefore, it is obvious that CG System wide opportunities should also be sought and fora and mechanisms established for dialogue on these. It is not immediately apparent, however, as to how best this might be approached. The impression of past exchanges and debates is that there have, in the main, been characterised by denunciation, exhortation and expressions of moral outrage, on the one hand, and a dismissive and even condescending posture, on the other. Given this, it would appear obvious that progress will depend on achieving a much improved structure for exchanges (albeit angry ones) on issues such as IPR and GMOs. A careful 'unpacking' of key questions might be useful in this regard and a possible framework might be taken from the recent discussion paper by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, *The Use of*

---

<sup>27</sup> We say 'apparently' to reflect that this is a view shared with us during this evaluation but one for which we have no independent verification or evaluation.

*Genetically Modified Crops in Developing Countries*<sup>28</sup>. This discussion paper sets out some of the key issues of science and ethics and invites careful examination of these, including:

- possible benefits and possible risks;
- socio-economic considerations;
- current and possible uses in developing countries, including outline case studies in areas such as Bt cotton, sweet potato, banana, abiotic stress and improved micronutrients in rice, and herbicide resistance in soybean;
- the potential and desirability of organic farming;
- dangers to small-scale farmers;
- governance and regulatory issues;
- the need for choice and sovereignty at individual, local and national levels;
- etc.

There are, of course, many other sources of information on these issues and many of these also disaggregate issues into a range of discrete questions and issues aimed at combining scientific, ethical, sociological, economic and political factors. The Nuffield discussion paper, however, is fixed squarely on key ethical issues that have been at the root of the deepest and most obvious divisions between agricultural scientists and the multinational Private Sector, on the one hand, and Civil Society, some advocacy groups and some leading academics, on the other<sup>29</sup>. As such, the Nuffield paper would seem to offer to CGIAR partnership interests a useful framework for better informed, less polemical and more patient exchange on these matters. *Accordingly, we would also recommend that new spaces be created for exchanges on an issue by issue basis as delineated in the Nuffield report preceded by careful antecedent investment in the preparation of comprehensive background papers on each issue.*

8. With regard to the PSC, it is hoped that the new time-bound, three year framework that was decided in 2003 will revitalise the work of the Committee and the commitment of its membership. It is also hoped that it will find a much more receptive and responsive environment than prior efforts at the Secretariat and Centres levels. This evaluation has noted, however, that, although the main aim of the new programme is to build 'genuinely functional partnerships', its identified activities are more a listing of generic areas of general interest than a specific work plan or business plan. For example, the programme's main aims include 'to seek specific programme linkages', 'to seek to identify and act on complementarities of mutual interest', 'to facilitate and increase spaces for policy exchanges', and 'to invite, facilitate and support Bellagio-type meetings'. *We recommend that the new PSC programme be 'market tested' over the next 2-4 years with the market test being the determination of whether the PSC and its programme have genuine interlocutors within the CG*

---

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/filelibrary/pdf/gn\\_crops\\_summary.pdf](http://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/filelibrary/pdf/gn_crops_summary.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> A further suggested basis for focused examination of difficult and contested ethical issues would be the excellent study on IPR and Development Policy, '*Integrating Intellectual Property Rights and Development Policy*', Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Department for International Development, United Kingdom, London, September, 2002.

*system. This, we suggest, should be accomplished via the conversion of the PSC programme into a specific work plan which would include an activities profile, specification of 'end points', milestones and a framework for ongoing evaluation.* The market test will help to determine the extent to which genuine and functional programme and project collaboration can be established. The relatively new Challenge Programme may offer a particular opportunity for such a determination. The international Private Sector will not and should not continue to commit to the PSC partnership arrangement if a genuine product market cannot be established. Such determination is equally imperative for the CG System.

9. Governance of the partnerships between the CG System, the PSC and the NGOC has involved inclusion of constituency membership on the Council of the CG, with one designated representative of each Committee. It is unequivocally clear from the interview and questionnaire surveys that were carried out during this evaluation that this model of representation and governance is subject to deep contestation with a strong majority opposed to voting membership on either a PSC or NGOC constituency basis, not least because the designated council members could not claim representativeness.

This suggests a possible distinction between shareholder and stakeholder. The governing bodies of several United Nations agencies, for example, now include both shareholders (the representatives of the nation-states that contribute financially to and which are ultimately liable for the operations of these agencies) with voting rights and stakeholders (mainly representatives of Civil Society) as contributors and observers but without voting rights. The governing structure of the Global Environmental Facility also assigns any voting rights exclusively to financial shareholders but it also provides an annual forum for exchange with other interested and affected parties and encourages observer involvement in its governance sessions.

This raises the question of what governance framework would best serve the future interests of the CG System, bearing in mind the extent and strength of solidly negative views held with regard to the current arrangement equating constituency to voting shareholder. *The evaluation team debated this matter extensively but was unable to arrive at a common judgement.* On the one hand, we see merit in the argument that the CG Executive Council should be constituted only by those with financial liability for the CG System, who represent a clearly defined constituency and are in a position to speak for that constituency. Such arrangements would in no way obviate the kind of spokesperson-observer status mentioned with regard to certain UN agencies or the differentiated stakeholder-shareholder spaces provided by the GEF model. On the other hand, we can also see merit in a blurring of this kind of differentiation, for its foundation is in essence that those who pay are those who vote, perhaps a somewhat antiquated notion at best. A key issue in our view is whether/how the role of the stakeholder could be expanded and incorporated into larger functional partnerships.

*Accordingly, we would recommend that an especially prudent and cautious posture be adopted on governance structures for the CGIAR, especially with regard to any claims for governance membership on a constituency basis.* As part of such a posture, consideration might also be given to establishing clear rules of engagement and codes of conduct for those who might be invited to serve as members of CG governing bodies.

## **PART SIX**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In the mid-1990s, the CGIAR experienced a deep crisis. The immediate cause was a precipitous decline in donor funding, but more serious were concerns about the continuing relevance of the CG System itself. The CG's R&D system, established in the 1970s, was predicated on broadly-based partnerships between CG Centres situated in 'developing' countries and the advanced public sector laboratories and universities in 'developed' countries. This model had responded well to the circumstances of the 1970s and 1980s when agricultural research capabilities and facilities in most developing countries were limited, the bulk of agricultural research conducted by public bodies and the delivery of new agricultural technologies dominated by state-to-state arrangements. But by the 1990s international R&D circumstances had changed - dramatically in many parts of the developing world - and an array of important new players had entered the arena. There had been a dramatic expansion in the role of international Civil Society in addressing issues of food security, sustainable livelihoods and technological innovation aimed at meeting the needs of poor and marginalised agricultural producers. At the same time, the Private Sector had become a dominant new force in agricultural R&D through advances in biotechnology and bio-engineering. Finally the demarcations of public versus private goods or of intellectual property rights across many factors in the international food chain were undergoing radical transformation and becoming a source of dispute and conflict.

Against this background, a 'CGIAR Renewal' initiative was launched in 1994, culminating in a 'Special Ministerial Meeting' in Lucerne, Switzerland in February 1995 which centred on how the CG System should respond to:

- scientific and technological advances and breakthroughs, especially in biotechnology and the dominance of the international Private Sector in these;
- the increasing complexity of IPR issues and the challenges these were posing to existing assumptions about the boundaries and provision of essential public goods;
- the numerous roles and centrality of Civil Society in all aspects of international development;
- the radical shift that had occurred in the comparative advantage of the CGIAR whereby it had become increasingly difficult to make the case that the agricultural research needs of most of Asia could best be served via CG Centres. Across a broad range of countries, the dominant viewpoint held that such research could be done more cost effectively and at least as well within the countries themselves, with the exception of sub-Saharan Africa.

A main conclusion reached at Lucerne was that the future effectiveness of the CG System would require that its basic partnership architecture be expanded and brought up to date through new proactive arrangements involving the Private Sector and NGOs. To this end, it was agreed that two Partnership Committees would be established, one for the Private Sector (PSC) and the second for the NGOs (NGOC).

Both Committees were formed, became fully operational by the end of 1995 and functioned continuously until November, 2002, when the NGOC announced a unilateral 'freeze' on its

relations with the CG System, The PSC has continued operations to this date while those of the NGOC remain suspended.

The two Committees have, therefore, ended up - for the time being at least - at quite divergent points in their evolution. Yet, while their operations were entirely separate and their accomplishments and gains quite distinct, their evolution between 1995 and 2002 has a number of striking similarities. From the onset of their operations, both demonstrated a remarkable degree of enthusiasm and commitment and in both cases initial activity levels were impressive. Both struggled over the entire period to define their roles, purposes and to establish their legitimacy. Without significant success, both sought successive clarification as to exactly what the CG System expected of them, how it wished to engage with them, and to understand whether there were boundary conditions beyond which the CG could not or would not go. Both were left essentially to self-define themselves and their roles, to choose their own areas for strategic focus, programme choice, intensity of engagement and style of operation, and to determine the means by which they would seek to establish and project their legitimacy. Both were confounded by the federalist model of the CG System and the absence of a unitary decision-making mechanism. Both concluded separately from their initial efforts that, while their work might be strongly supported at the CG System level, there was at best indifference at the level of at least some of the Centres and from some donor agencies. Both went through successive attempts over seven years at defining and redefining their roles, mandates and status and, in parallel, both expressed growing frustration over what they interpreted as a one-way relationship and a relative absence of meaningful feedback and engagement in the partnership.

The committees were founded by the CGIAR on a largely open-ended and non-restrictive basis. This may have been an expression of exceptional good faith, but with the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that it invited problems that might otherwise have been avoided. It is, however, far too easy to place blame on the CG System. The absence of CG precision on what was really expected of the two committees may have been largely unavoidable, given the governance complexities of the CG itself with its multiple constituencies, high levels of individual Centre autonomy, and lack of science policy consensus (e.g. biotechnology and IPR) among the donors. Balancing the complex and conflicting array of interests and preferences across a constituency as varied as that of the CGIAR has always been a gargantuan task; this has become all the more so in today's highly charged emotional environment surrounding agricultural biotechnology fears of 'Frankenstein foods' and of debates that polarise and pitch issues of basic human security against those of IPR.

This context is essential to understanding the evolution of the relationship between the CGIAR and the two committees. The structure of this summary first provides separate overviews and syntheses of the experience. This is followed by a brief and selective examination of other attempts at development partnerships with a view to extracting lessons that might be learned from those experiences. Finally, we turn to an outline of conclusions and suggestions for the future of CG partnerships and some concluding remarks.

## **6.1 The CGIAR-PSC Experience: 1995-2004**

Senior members of the international private sector responded quickly and enthusiastically to the CGIAR's invitation to a partnership and succeeded in establishing a fully functioning PSC only a few months following the Lucerne meeting. Four working groups were formed on a

'fast track' agenda to define the partnership relationship and to give operational meaning to the broad statements of general intent offered by the CG System (e.g. 'To collaborate in biotechnological science and its application to achieve global food security and to address the needs and circumstances of poor farmers').

Attempts to establish an operational basis for the partnership, however, proved elusive from the outset and for most of the history of the PSC. Doubts were expressed within the PSC in 1995 about its mandate and the CGIAR was formally requested to clarify whether the Committee was to function as a 'Partnership Committee' or an 'Advisory Committee.' The CG's response generously encouraged the PSC to take initiatives and to self-define its own boundaries. This meant that, from the beginning, initiatives and proposals for potential Private Sector-CGIAR partnerships involved essentially a one-way flow rather than proceeding on the basis of dialogue and negotiation between collaborators.

Notwithstanding the ambiguities with respect to role and expectations, the PSC's fast track work programme was applied with enthusiasm under the leadership of its first Chair, aided by a strong commitment by PSC members and a mutually-supportive relationship with the CGIAR Secretariat. Thus at the end of 1996, following its survey of individual CGIAR Centres and extensive exchanges with the Secretariat, the PSC tabled a number of proposals for partnership, including:

- A global Private Sector summit on agricultural research needs to reduce poverty;
- Joint programming in selected areas of technology development, especially in biotechnology;
- Collaborative arrangements for biotechnology applications, genetic conservation, seed production, and information systems / training;
- Facilitating Private Sector provision to the CGIAR of biotechnology tools and trade in intellectual property;
- Provision of legal advice to Centres (presumably on a demand-led basis) on IPR issues;
- Interacting with the Centres on common policy questions.

Following from these proposals, the PSC conducted an extensive study on the means for CGIAR-Private Sector partnerships in biotechnology, including suggestions for a delineation of complementary interests and some means by which an operational division of labour might be achieved.

These proposals demonstrate unequivocally that the initial interpretation of its role by the PSC was as much more than an advisor to the CGIAR. Rather, the essence of the proposals it presented at that time were for operations involving functional collaboration and joint programming efforts.

While the CGIAR-Secretariat welcomed and provided endorsement to these proposals, the absence of significant or concrete uptake was clearly a source of frustration to the PSC membership. Disappointment was formally expressed in 1997 over the relative absence of feedback, the lack of response to the individual proposals and especially to the absence of actions resulting from the paper on partnership in biotechnology. The disappointment and frustration were increased as a result of PSC visits to individual Centres which at least some

PSC members interpreted as note merely a relative lack of interest but even distrust over collaboration in biotechnology and IPR.

PSC momentum slowed significantly over the period 1998-2002. This may be attributed partially to the intensity of internal reform and change that occurred within the CGIAR over this period, which included first the Third System Review, followed by the Change Design and Management Team (CDMT) exercise and then by the implementation of agreed reforms. Under the circumstances of such intensive and extensive change, it was probably inevitable that the rate of proposals and initiatives from the PSC would slow and that the CG at the system level was, in any event, somewhat disadvantaged in responding to such initiatives. Whatever the explanatory factors, however, there is no doubt that this period witnessed a significant lessening of enthusiasm of PSC members. The new PSC Chair struggled to counteract the effects of disappointed efforts, 'membership fatigue', high turnover and a declining interest in continuing with the partnership experiment. From three face-to-face meetings in each of 1996 and 1997, there were only two in 1998, and in 2001 these were replaced by two teleconferences. A formal suggestion was made to reduce the size of the committee by about one-third. Points of frustration and concern over the relationship were formally communicated, including:

- in 1998, the PSC suggested that effective partnership would benefit from a reduction in the autonomy of individual Centres and the creation of a single, legally-empowered centre-wide policy body on matters such as IPR-guidelines;
- in early 1999 the PSC wrote formally to the CGIAR Chair expressing serious concerns about the statement and lack of any consultation on the so-called 'terminator technology' issued by the CGIAR that the PSC viewed as having negative implications for partnership. According to the PSC, that was the second time the CG has issued such a statement without consulting its PSC.
- In 2000, the PSC Chair complained that while the CGIAR Chair had been promoting the use of new research tools (i.e. biotechnology), 'this view is not shared by all donors and Centres.'

Compared to its first two years, therefore, the PSC's fast track efforts to define and operationalise the partnership became a much slower track over the subsequent four years. There were nevertheless attempts during this period to re-gain the earlier momentum. The PSC chair, for example, strongly urged the CGIAR to conduct a study of the individual centres in order to 'identify assets of value to others, ...to define the partnership potential of the CGIAR with the Private Sector.' With a view to facilitating this, the PSC identified 10 key assets of the CGIAR that it thought could be of significant and complementary value to those of the Private Sector, including advanced scientific expertise in twenty to twenty-five crops, well-established crop-testing network and experience, positive image and accumulated political capital, a capacity to work cooperatively with developing countries in establishing policies, regulatory frameworks and standards, etc. The PSC suggested that these assets could be used by the CGIAR as 'Trading Chips' on forming partnerships with the Private Sector.

Again, these proposals were graciously received by the CGIAR-Secretariat (with which PSC Chairs have enjoyed excellent and mutually-supportive relations since the creation of the PSC), but, in the view of PSC members, nothing much happened beyond this in the way of concrete response. Unsurprisingly, in 2002, the PSC formally communicated an 'urgent need for the CGIAR to clarify the purpose with its relation with the Private Sector' and indicated

its frustration by adding: 'Is it the CGIAR desire to have the Private Sector 'involved' as a partner in research or is it only (seeking) 'financial support' from the Private Sector?'

With hindsight, the 17<sup>th</sup> PSC meeting held in London in February 2003 (almost eight years to the day from the Lucerne meeting that had given birth to both the NGOC and the PSC) was probably critical to the prospects for continuing effort and goodwill by PSC members. It was also a pivotal meeting as it was the first for many PSC members who had recently agreed to join the Committee. Due to the diligent efforts and commitment of its Chair, the PSC had made extensive preparations for the meeting and had structured its agenda with the aim of moving the Committee's engagement away from the level of another generalised policy dialogue and towards a time-bound business plan for the future work of the PSC. As a consequence, most of the meeting focussed on strategic partnership issues, on agreeing on initiatives the PSC could undertake with and on behalf of the CGIAR, and on a specific time-bound work plan.

Thus, the Committee arrived at an agreed plan of work for three years that would be focussed in three generic areas, alliance building, policy dialogue and communications which would include:

- Alliance building initiatives:
  - seeking specific programmatic linkages, complementarities and mutual opportunities within the new CGIAR challenge programmes;
  - establishing with individual centres closer relationships and understandings, including through an exchange of scientists between the Private Sector and the CGIAR, and exploring opportunities and interests in new joint initiatives of a specific programme and project nature;
  - recognising that the Private Sector is heavily engaged with the delivery of agricultural technologies and that the CGIAR is not, to seek identify and act on complementarities of mutual interest that could increase the availability of CGIAR technologies for poverty reduction.
- Policy dialogue initiatives:
  - facilitating and increasing spaces for policy exchanges and discussions of strategy between Private Sector CEOs and senior level policy makers in the World Bank, the CGIAR and other international actors;
  - creating specific opportunities for serious and systematic policy discussions on issues of public goods and intellectual property rights;
- Communication initiatives
  - building on the above, to seek appropriate opportunities for public declarations of corporate support for the efforts and initiatives of the CGIAR;
  - to invite, facilitate and support Bellagio-type meetings (i.e. similar to the meetings held in Rockefeller Foundation's facilities in Bellagio, Italy, that led to the founding of the CGIAR) to focus on longer-term issues and challenges in the building of partnerships for development.

It is obvious that the above framework remains highly general. It does not offer a detailed work plan with a clear assignment of tasks, critical path and end points. On the other hand, it does establish what could be a helpful new framework and, very importantly, it is a framework that has been formally agreed between the PSC and the CGIAR. This invites,



therefore, additional work to translate the general into a more specific plan of action. In the view of the evaluation team, this may represent an important step in the right direction, although the trajectory of the overall PSC-CGIAR initiative since 1995 suggests that it should be greeted with a balanced combination of cautious optimism, on the one side, and informed scepticism, on the other. If it is to succeed, it will also need a much more receptive and responsive environment at the level of the individual centres and the Secretariat than seems to have been applied to prior efforts.

## **6.2 The NGOC Experience: 1995-2002**

### *Phase I: Networking, perspective sharing, defining and communicating NGO positions*

Following from the decision at Lucerne, a fully-operational NGOC was quickly established. At its first meeting in October of that year it defined its aims in the following broad terms:

- to strengthen people-centred approaches to sustainable agriculture and,
- to contribute to a mutual understanding among NGOs, CGIAR and farmers' organisations, by facilitating communication between the NGO community and CGIAR members and by providing policy inputs from its perspective.

In its first year, the Committee focussed on fact finding. Its members travelled extensively, met different constituencies, and visited a number of CG centres. At the mid-term meeting (May 1996) in Indonesia a number of findings were formally reported by the committee, notably that: work with NGOs had not been mainstreamed in the CG system; CGIAR staff appeared to be either too busy for or possibly resistant to working with NGOs; within the CG Centres the relationship between the CG and Civil Society was consigned to committees; and domestic NGOs in countries where CG Centres were located were by and large either unaware of or confused about the programmes and work of the Centres. Building on this assessment, the Committee subsequently (October 1996) tabled proposals aimed at improving the situation through the strengthening of partnerships, including:

- i. Reinforcement of collaboration between NGOs and the individual CG centres through greater investment by the CGIAR in establishing NGO research partnership and creation of a specific fund to facilitate this.
- ii. International centres should be mandated to work closely with NGOs to disseminate farmer-inspired research;
- iii. Priority to including NGO representatives – people working with farmer and farmers' organisations – on governing bodies of the Centres.
- iv. A review of relevance of CG science to the poor.

In 1997, the Committee continued to expand its knowledge through visits to CG Centres and an extensive round of NGO consultations in Cameroon, Mali, and the Andean countries of Latin America. Based on these consultations, the NGOC presented the AGM of the CGIAR in October 1997, with a position paper on biotechnology, drawing attention to 'very serious misgivings' of the NGO community and warning that endorsement of biotechnology by the CG system might alienate much of the NGO community. The same paper underscored the NGOC assessment that biotechnological research was dominated by large transnational corporations and heavily biased towards high-tech agriculture that had little or no relevance to the problems of small and peasant farmers. It argued that the 'relationship of the CG system with the Private Sector needed careful review'. A further position paper on

Intellectual Property Rights followed in May, 1998, setting out NGOC concerns to retain agricultural knowledge in the public domain and that the CGIAR was at risk of ignoring the interests of poor farmers.

The focus of the NGOC between 1995-1998 was clearly on systemic (i.e. the CG System as a whole and the means for structural and strategic partnerships) and large macro international political economy issues (i.e. the ‘ownership’ of biotechnological research and IPR). At the CG System level, the analyses and policy positions recommended on these issues by the NGOC were welcomed as ‘valuable inputs to our thinking and to (new) research strategies’. The NGOC, however, expressed its ‘disappointment’ at what it regarded as an absence of concrete actions.

#### *Phase 2 - 1999-2001: Building a constituency and activities*

By the end of 1998, the NGOC appears to have accorded somewhat less attention to global policy issues such as agricultural biotechnology and IPR and to have focussed increasingly on specific areas and activities that might be conducive to CGIAR-NGO partnerships. In May 1999, a proposal was made to restructure the geographic membership on the committee (to ensure equal representation – two members each from Asia, Africa, Latin America and one from US and Europe) with the aim of improving linkages between the CGIAR and ‘small-farmer interests’. Throughout 2000-2001, the committee organised a number of regional meetings, workshops and consultations specifically aimed at identifying agricultural research issues of priority concern to small farmers in different regions of the world on which the CG System and NGOs could collaborate. Proposals were also made for collaboration on:

- a global programme for documenting and promoting local innovations in agroecology and natural resource management;
- an interactive database for exchanging information about practice-tested experiences;
- a multistakeholder learning platform on techniques for direct sowing, mulching and cropping;
- a database on scaling-up successful local initiatives in agroecology and resource management.

As for the PSC, the initiatives and proposals of the NGOC during this period coincided with the CG’s reform programme initiatives and this was certainly a factor in what the members of the NGOC came to interpret increasingly as a general lack of responsiveness. Indeed, by 2001, the NGOC was regularly and officially registering ‘a one-way flow of positions and proposals into the CGIAR system with little or no evidence of responsiveness’. In May 2001, the NGOC endorsed a broad Civil Society declaration signed by over 70 groups critiquing the report of the CGIAR Change Design and Management Team and conveying its assessment of the change plan as ‘deeply flawed’ and that this ‘...will seriously undermine the viability and effectiveness of the CGIAR system in the future’.

#### *Phase 3 – end 2001-2003: Increasing engagement and eventual disengagement*

At the end of 2001, the NGOC openly questioned the utility of the partnership committee arrangement. This was followed by an NGOC report presented at the 2002 November meeting in Manila which underscored unequivocally the extent to which the CGIAR-NGOC relationships had deteriorated. The report catalogued NGOC initiatives over the previous year, expressed frustration that these had gone unanswered and then summarised its broad concerns over the CGIAR as follows:

- ‘CGIAR is deviating from its mandate to produce public goods for the benefit of poor agricultural producers and to safeguard genetic resources taken from farmers’ fields and held in public trust by the CGIAR gene banks, by adopting a corporate agenda for agricultural research and development. The consideration of Syngenta Foundation’s membership was one such instance as well as the quest for partnerships with the Private Sector, which undermine the public role of CGIAR.
- It has failed to support an immediate moratorium on the release of GM crops in their Centres of origin and diversity in the light of GMO contamination in Mexico and the potential contamination of other Centres in the years ahead.
- It has failed to uphold the principle of the FAO-CGIAR Trust Agreement that requires all germplasm and its genetic parts and components to remain in the public domain.
- It has actively promoted genetic engineering technologies and products, which are incompatible with farmer-led agroecological research.’

The report concluded that: ‘in the light of these concerns, the NGOC is reassessing its relationship with the CGIAR’, and that it would be undertaking a detailed review of its engagement. Events at the Manila meeting caused matters to go further. When the CGIAR announced at that meeting that it had granted CGIAR membership to the Syngenta Foundation, farmers groups, present at the meeting and organised under the People’s Street Conference were incensed. A Civil Society coalition issued a communiqué stating that: ‘the CGIAR has shown itself unable or (un)willing to reform’ and others called for the NGOC to resign in protest ‘in solidarity of billions of farmers struggling against imperialist control and for a farmer-centered agricultural system’. In response to this, the NGOC announced a unilateral ‘freeze’ in its relationship with CGIAR at the ‘system level and a decision not to accept resources from the system’.

Civil Society engagement with the CGIAR via the NGOC was clearly in crisis and had been transformed into unilateral proactive disengagement.

In retrospect, it would seem that the NGOC engagement was seriously, perhaps fatally, disadvantaged from the outset for three basic reasons:

- the enormous mismatch in expectations between NGOs and the CGIAR, on the one hand, and between different members of the NGOC, on the other;
- the failure to negotiate *ex ante* an agreed operating framework, including rules of engagement and processes to address and resolve conflicts;
- the absence of agreed programmes of action and structures of accountability.

The NGOC in just the seven years of its existence restructured its mandate and objectives on three occasions, and was proposing, before the freeze in the relationship, a further reworking of its objectives. This constant need for review indicates a fundamental uncertainty about roles, functions and legitimacy.

This, however, is not to discount the efforts that were made both by the NGOC and the CG-Secretariat. Indeed, the NGOC made exceptional efforts and demonstrated an abundance of good faith in trying to make the relationship productive and positive. The initial remit assigned to the NGOC was problematic and, at best, opaque, involving only the general idea of catalysing relationships between the CGIAR and the vocal and influential NGO

community. Given these factors, the Committee did what it could. It brought to the CGIAR perspectives from Civil Society – some of which were, no doubt, not entirely welcomed - on GMOs and IPRs; it travelled widely with a view to capturing and highlighting different voices and viewpoints on agricultural research; and it visited some of the CG Centres in an attempt to determine complementarities. There is, however, little to indicate that the CG System was able to accord these efforts systematic consideration or to operationalise them as a basis for strategic programming.

In retrospect, it seems from the earliest operations of the NGOC that a clear and major lacuna in the overall partnership was a structure for the internalisation of learning and resolution of competing ideas.

In juxtaposition to global policy issues such as GMOs or IPRs, evidence from NGOC efforts at the regional level through workshops and other activities indicates that, to some extent at least, approaches and strategies focussed at this level exerted some very positive influences on the CGIAR. The involvement of NGOs in documenting successful initiatives, in advocating the scaling up positive development lessons from local levels and in bringing to bear the issues of sustainability and equity in agricultural research, all seem to have contributed positively to the thinking at the CGIAR at different levels.

Yet, in parallel with these gains, areas of substantial disagreement also grew, because the very diversity of the NGO community meant that, without meaningful and structured exchange on global policy issues, other efforts at engagement were bound to be interpreted by many as superficial. Even the provision of a seat to the NGOC at the newly-constituted CGIAR Executive Council, including chairing the Executive Council's Programme Committee – a step that is unusual and viewed by many as commendable – became interpreted as a hollow gesture and even as an attempt to 'buy silence and docility'. This step, even as it gave NGOC access to decision-making processes in the CGIAR, again underscored the absence of planned institutional mechanisms between the CGIAR and the NGOs to benchmark activities and disagreements and to set up forums for resolution of differences.

Because of this, underlying differences were never resolved. Global policy issues and concerns on GMOs, IPRs, public-private partnerships in research and governance were raised by the NGOC as regular items in the CGIAR mid-term and annual meetings, but there is little to suggest how either side followed up with approaches aimed at resolving their differences. The impression from the official records of these meetings is that these issues became ritualistic with the NGOC voicing fully predictable perspectives and the CGIAR system recording these with equal predictability.

As a result, to a considerable extent, the discourse on global policy matters between the NGOC and the CGIAR system became a dialogue of the deaf.

In all this, the frustration of the NGOC appears to have grown. It looked increasingly outside the CGIAR system for support and alliances so that its concerns about and priorities for international agricultural research could be translated into concrete actions. A positive externality to the NGOC experience may have been the spawning of a much more widespread interest in agricultural research, but neither the NGOC nor the CGIAR system appear to have focussed on the strategies required to benefit from the growing public concern and constituency. The vast and broad NGOC constituency demanded accountability from 'its

representatives' and, paradoxically, the growth of interest in international agricultural research became divisive and eventually destructive of the institution of the NGOC.

In the view of the evaluation team, however, the root causes of the failures and disappointments of this experiment go much deeper than the shortcomings in the approaches followed either by the NGOC or the CGIAR system. Rather, it is our view that this experiment can only be properly and constructively understood if it is placed and interpreted in its larger context - a context that accounts for the overwhelming complexity of engagements such as these, that aim to function simultaneously at the local, national and global levels, that seek to combine the best of the highly advanced sciences with advocacy, activism and grassroots ministrations to the most needy and vulnerable of our world, and that need to accommodate a bewildering diversity of interests.

### **6.3 An Urgent Need for Clear Thinking on Development Partnerships**

Over the past decade, the idea of 'partnerships' has increasingly become an indispensable element of international development discourse. The prevailing view is that partnerships of all kinds are essential to improve development effectiveness by increasing 'voice' (however interpreted), efficiency, ownership, by reducing costs and competition for the same price and product markets and by 'achieving synergies'.

But the term 'partnership' is vague and problematic, perhaps especially so in the discourse of international development. Partnership objectives can range from information sharing and 'getting to know each other better', to learning about 'how two parties might work together', to specific actions of an interdependent nature that assign responsibilities and accountabilities to two or more parties. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) uses the word 'partnership' to refer to agreement on a 'shared orientation or framework' between public and private sectors and government and Civil Society organisations. Such a broad definition allows for almost any type of inter-institutional arrangement. It is implicit in this that different types of partnerships are dependent upon different levels of trust, organisational cultures, target clienteles/areas, or commonalities of mandate.

Matters are complicated further by the limited availability of empirical study and evidence about what it takes to build successful partnerships. The limited systematic empirical evidence available on public-private partnerships suggests that sustained successes are constrained by several key factors. First and foremost, the public and private sectors face different incentives and different cost structures that affect their willingness and ability to enter into partnerships. Second, the public and private sectors hold preconceived opinions and perceptions of each other that often hinder cooperation. Third, cooperation and competition are inadequately managed between partners, particularly with respect to the production and use of scientific knowledge and technology. Finally, public-private partnership is hindered by the general absence of guidelines and working models.

Notwithstanding the lack of systematic empirical research on partnerships, a range of case studies does exist and the extent of recent efforts in international development partnerships between public, private and Civil Society entities provide instructive, albeit anecdotal, experiences from which to draw. Some involve efforts that have much in common with the main purposes and general orientation of the CGIAR Partnership Committees (e.g. the Global Forum for Agricultural Research -GFAR- or the more recently established African

Agricultural Technology Foundation AATF) and these obviously require careful scrutiny in the interests of an effective division of labour and the avoidance of costly overlap and duplication of effort. Other public-private and public-Civil Society and private-Civil Society partnerships would also appear to hold valuable lessons for the CGIAR, at both the system level and with regard to individual Centres, as it seeks to build (and/or re-build) its partnerships. For example, discussions and interviews with a range of organisations and institutions experienced in global partnerships involving public, private and Civil Society actors indicate general consensus on the following:

- ***There has been too much emphasis on partnerships as ends in themselves*** and too little recognition that partnerships can create burdensome transactions costs. Partnerships can be cost-ineffective just as they can be cost-effective.
- Recent partnerships in international development demonstrate a tendency to be driven by relatively non-specific notions such as 'inclusiveness', 'participation', and 'voice'. Such notions may be of the highest order of importance, but they have tended to divert attention away from the painstaking detail required for successful partnerships. As the old adage holds, ***the devil is in the detail and the detail requires specification of clear objectives and agreement on the respective comparative advantage of the parties to partnership agreements*** and efforts.
- ***There are major issues and problems of asymmetry of power, influence, capabilities, experience and credibility***, but these are seldom dealt with directly and transparently. The result has been that international development partnerships often create the patina of an equality that simply does not exist and that serves to generate disappointment, frustration and resentment. This patina of equality can be especially bewildering to the Private Sector whose 'business culture' tends to articulate such asymmetries at the outset of any partnership and to regularise or regulate these via specific legal and financial instruments. The dominant international development paradigm of a 'universalism of partnerships of equals' may be noble in its intent but it avoids dealing with essential realities and, as such, requires modification to meet the needs of every specific application.
- ***Constituency committees are probably not the most productive way of engaging with either Civil Society or the Private Sector***. The parties they are intended to represent are important, but their importance is a function of different stages, locations and times in the continuum. There are major, if not insurmountable, problems of representativeness (e.g. NGOC was always fair in underscoring this by insisting that it was not representing either NGOs generally or farmers) and the danger that small committees get captured by individual views and become frustrated because they feel unable to influence larger policy agendas.
- ***As a basic rule, generic partnership arrangements should be avoided***. Partnerships should be specific to function and objective and should be entered into only on the basis of *ex ante* utilitarian agreements bounded by specific rules and agreed divisions of labour. This basic rule is cited by UNICEF as the key ingredient to the successes of its many partnership experiences. For example, UNICEF's evaluation of its partnership with the International Association of Pediatricians for low-cost delivery of child health emphasises that an agreement on general purposes may have been a useful first step but that 'development effectiveness' and 'value-added' depended on functional division of labour agreements for 'specific activities by specific actors in specific places at specific times'.

- ***Especially where institutions with major differences in 'cultural perspectives and traditions' are involved, the front-ended investments required may extend over several years*** in order to establish the specific bases for partnership. These investments may require several years of effort antecedent to the signing of any agreements (if indeed agreements are possible). For example, the environmental management partnership in Australia between a major non-governmental organisation (the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)) and a transnational mining enterprise (Rio Tinto) was agreed only after approximately four years of prior discussion and negotiation in order to establish a mutually-agreeable framework. According to Rio Tinto, its successful partnerships with Civil Society and multilateral organisations have depended on:
  - *ex ante* agreement on specific outcomes and on how these are to be measured;
  - time-bound agreements that include stipulation of mutual responsibilities, a work plan and an agreed exit strategy.

Similarly, the extensive partnership arrangements of the World Resources Institute (WRI) on transportation systems and preparing for climate change in the United States involve collaborative arrangements with organisations such as Shell Oil and General Motors. The partnership agreements for these were entered into only following solid agreement on objectives, specific purposes, end points, milestones and exit strategies.

Even following such efforts, success is far from assured. It needs to be borne in mind that the resulting partnerships can still be fraught with tensions, given the continuous requirement for Civil Society organisations to justify their partnerships to their own diverse and often divided constituencies.

- ***Evaluation criteria, standards and timing should be integral to partnership agreements.*** As already indicated above, these factors are considered essential by organisations as diverse as the World Resources Institute, UNICEF, Rio Tinto and the World Bank. In fact, this is a 'best practice' standard for 'development effectiveness' that is now being adopted across the entire international development system and as a strategic imperative for United Nations development agencies.

At the general level, what is clear is that the intensity of requirements for a successful partnership varies with the purpose and type of partnership being sought. The following offers a rough typology of partnerships in terms of the depth and intensity of arrangements required for five different types of partnerships, defined as follows:

- ***Consultative partnership.*** This exists among institutions which wish to establish new relations with other organisations for information exchange. Regular venues such as consultations or dialogues are organised to serve as initial mechanisms through which various institutions get to know each other by sharing experiences, ideas and opinions.
- ***Coordinative partnership.*** Efforts are exerted to avoid duplication of activities and synchronise separate institutional initiatives for greater efficiency and effectiveness in field operations. As a starting point for coordination, interagency committees and activities are usually organised to do a checklist or inventory of project interventions in the communities. An example is the relief efforts undertaken by government and NGOs where an interagency group is organised to avoid duplication in the distribution of goods to earthquake victims.

- ***Complementary partnership.*** In this form or level of relationship, though each party has separate initiatives, they are both guided by a common programme framework characterised by purposive efforts to support each other.
- ***Collaborative partnership.*** In this relationship, both institutions agree to work together, sharing a common vision, establishing common objectives and plans of action on a programme level. Mechanisms are institutionalised so as to facilitate delivery of services to their target communities (for example: sector-wide approaches).
- ***Critical partnership.*** This may be the highest form and level of partnership where both institutions consider each other as indispensable partners in pursuing broad development goals and visions. Both sectors work together on a more strategic long-term arrangement on various aspects of the socio-economic and political life of the community. NGOs, for example, are given access to government resources and are also given the chance to participate in the policy formulation and decision-making processes.



**TABLE 1**  
**Levels of Institutional Partnerships**

| Nature of partnership            | Description   | Objective  | Indicators   | Possible areas for partnership  | Key requirements  |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Consultative partnership</b>  | Sharing of knowledge/information/technologies through agreement on lines/forms of communication                                       | Information exchange<br>Awareness building                           | Regular venues and/or systemic structures for information exchange                 | Seminars, workshops, consultations, newsletters, electronic connectivity                    | Openness<br>Participatory   |
| <b>Coordinative partnership</b>  | Separate initiatives not necessarily supportive of each other yet aspiring to complementarity to achieve efficiency and effectiveness | Avoidance of duplication<br>Synchronisation of activities            | Interagency committees and activities<br>Agreement on norms to guide mutual review | Awareness Campaigns<br><i>Ad hoc</i> committees on country, sectoral or scientific concerns | Openness<br>Regular and sustained efforts<br>Representative arrangements  |
| <b>Complementary partnership</b> | Separate initiatives but guided by a common framework characterized by purposive efforts to support each other                        | Integrated program approaches<br>Resource sharing                    | Programmes that can achieve objectives only if others achieve theirs               | Public-private MOUs on technology production and distribution                               | Mutual trust<br>Established complementarity of interests<br>Leadership support<br>Participatory                                       |
| <b>Collaborative partnership</b> | Joint efforts with a common vision and objectives   | Joint programmes<br>Policymaking                                     | Long-term joint programmes<br>Institutionalized mechanisms                         | Integrated area development<br>Policy formulation<br>Decision making In national bodies     | Mutual trust<br>Shared vision<br>Congruence in strategy<br>Leadership<br>Participatory<br>Clear delineation of tasks/responsibilities |
| <b>Critical partnership</b>      | Interdependence<br>Recognition of each other as indispensable partners in the development process                                     | Joint strategic planning, shared decision-making, and implementation | Long-term and Institutionalized working relations                                  | All undertakings  | All of the above plus longer-term, codified 'voting' or decision-making regime  |

*Source* Adapted from FAO, 1994, Peoples Participation Programme in Rural Development in the Philippines. FAO's Partnership with NGOs in Project Formulation, People's Participation, FAO, Rome

I  
N  
T  
E  
R  
N  
S  
I  
T  
Y  
O  
F  
P  
A  
R  
T  
N  
E  
R  
S  
H  
I  
P  
A  
R  
R  
A  
N  
G  
E  
M  
E  
N  
T



Applying the above typology to the experience of the two CGIAR Committees since their establishment in 1995, it would seem reasonable to conclude that many of the difficulties encountered arose from the fact that different actors at different stages had in mind very different types of partnership. The NGOC, for example would seem from the outset to have inclined much more strongly than the PSC to a view of the relationship as a 'critical partnership', whereas the PSC inclined more strongly to an arrangement more closely approximating a 'complementary partnership'. Within the CGIAR itself, the view as to which type or even types of partnership(s) appears to have been either mixed across the system as a whole or simply unclear and undecided. Whatever the case, ***an important point of departure for the future of CGIAR Partnerships would be to establish ex ante clarity and agreement on what is being sought, on agreed operating frameworks between the partnership parties, on how the partnership is to be measured and on procedures to address conflict resolution.***

Recently, there have been a range of studies that look at issues of international partnerships and division of labour through the conceptual framework of Global Public Goods. These may prove of relevance to the CGIAR, given that its activities could be considered as one of the purest of global public goods. Of most immediately relevance to the CGIAR, however, is the clarity with which these studies have demonstrated that partnerships must be carefully, deliberately and patiently structured to the particular good, service or outcome that is deemed as desirable and also that explicit rules (regimes) that define roles, boundaries and the rules of governance are imperative to the prospects for success. These are precisely the factors that were absent from the partnership committee structures established by the CGIAR at Lucerne. The obvious conclusion from the emerging literature on GPGs is that these factors now require specific attention by the CGIAR in thinking about how to take the partnership experiment forward.

More broadly, ***GPG approaches hold considerable potential to address global common concerns and to introduce greater consensus into debates on bioscience, human security and international development, on the roles that can be played by multilateral bodies like the CG, national governments, Civil Society and private corporations.*** By focussing attention on the limitations of current political, legal, institutional and financial arrangements for addressing global problems, the GPG approach has already made an important contribution. For CGIAR policy-makers, the current situation of the CG system and the undeniable importance of effective partnerships should make all the more urgent the need for a conceptual framework that integrates the key factors affecting the definition, delivery and consumption of GPGs. The potential payoffs from such a framework could be in better and more effective CGIAR partnership policies to address common concerns.

#### **6.4 Some Suggestions and Recommendations**

This review of public-private-Civil Society partnerships in general and of the CGIAR's experience since 1995 with its two partnership committees yields an unequivocal demonstration of four facts:

- First, while partnerships have become one of the central mantras in the theory and practice of international development, they almost invariably raise complex and difficult problems of asymmetry, whether of power, influence, experience, capabilities or of culture, preferences, including values and biases. While there is little in the way of systematic, empirical study, the recent emphasis on partnerships between diverse types of development actors has produced a great deal of important

learning about the requirements and conditions for success and value-added of such efforts.

- Second, partnerships between the CG system, the Private Sector and Civil Society probably entail special challenges and requirements as a consequence of:
  - the diffuse nature of CGIAR governance and decision-making which restricts and even obviates requirements for formalised, collective decision-making and ‘system accountability’;
  - the constant need for the CG system to balance and reconcile the complex and conflicting array of interests and preferences that make up the multiple constituencies of the CGIAR;
  - the highly charged emotional environment that has emerged on all aspects of biotechnology and issues of ownership of modern technologies relating to the food chain.
- Third, the Civil Society and constituencies that the two Committees are intended to represent are important, but their importance is a function of different stages, locations and times in the continuum and there are major, if not insurmountable, problems of representativeness.
- Fourth and most importantly, the devil is in the details and the details required for functional and mutually-beneficial partnerships between the CGIAR system, the Private Sector and Civil Society are formidable, especially if the aim is to achieve longer-term strategic partnerships. The abstract idea of partnerships almost always meets with general enthusiasm, but successful implementation almost always requires changes and major adjustments to the established behavioural patterns of the partnership parties and these unavoidably present barriers and produce opposition. Some opposition is a matter of groups who have vested interests, which include holding power and authority or traditions and even deep belief systems, which would be affected by partnership changes. We know that opposition is also very often due to misunderstandings as to what is intended and why.

The very nature of higher order partnerships is one of ‘distributed power’, where knowledge and technologies empower scientists, communities, workers, institutions, governments and so on. It is not merely a matter of such groups understanding the main forces and trends affecting them and why these require that they themselves change. It is also essential for individuals, firms, institutions and government to appreciate what they will have to do and why. Thus, higher order partnerships entail changes in mindsets, as well as complex processes of political economy and of political accountability and depend on burdensome and demanding efforts to explain, communicate, disseminate, consult, persuade and build consensus.

These four facts configure the enormity of the challenges confronted by the CGIAR system in its aim to build strong and far-reaching (i.e. higher order) partnerships with both Civil Society and the Private Sector.

In terms of next steps, therefore:

1. ***We recommend that the CGIAR commission an independent survey of its existing and previous relationships on the ground with Farmers’ Groups, NGOs and other***

**Civil Society actors.** This should aim to capture the benefits and costs, the appropriateness of arrangements at different levels (i.e. locally, nationally, regionally), the lessons learned (including issues of scale), the opportunities for scaling up, and the comparative advantages (and disadvantages) of different experiences and kinds of relationships. This needs to be done with rigour, care and patience with a view to achieving a fair and adequate reflection of viewpoints from the other actors as well as within the CGIAR Centres. The results should be published and disseminated as widely as possible as a basis for CG discourse with Farmers Groups, agricultural groupings, anti-poverty associations, NARS and other interested parties. The outcome of this should be used as an essential basis for decisions on the structure and characteristics of future CG partnerships with Civil Society.

2. ***We further recommend a careful examination of other partnership initiatives in international agricultural research partnerships in order to determine where these efforts are or could be better made complementary to the interests of the CG system.*** This should preferably be done on a fully independent basis, possibly by the newly-installed Science Council of the CGIAR. In particular, we suggest that such attention should focus on the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF). Whether or not there is costly overlap and duplication between these two institutions and the partnership committees of the CGIAR is beyond the remit of this evaluation. Nevertheless, it the conduct of this evaluation several interviewees pointed to GFAR and/or AATF as substitutes to or alternatives for the partnership committees. For this reason, it would seem appropriate and timely to carry out the further examination that we have suggested.
3. ***Following from this, an essential and pragmatic requirement is for the CG system to focus with clarity on what kind(s) of partnership(s) it seeks, on the costs, benefits and trade-offs required, on the organisational, managerial, governance and financial implications, and on the ‘rules of engagement’ that it regards as de minimus to its interests, mission, requirements and core competencies.*** In doing so, the CG system can benefit from the many lessons to be learned from the Partnership Committees’ experience to date as well as from the experiences of others. We hope that this evaluation may serve to facilitate and aid such a careful and focussed examination.
4. It is obvious, however, that this will not be a simple task, for, as this evaluation has revealed, within the CG system there are significant differences in receptivity to and even conflicts over partnerships. The CGIAR does not have a centralised body with the necessary authority and responsibility to take decisions and to speak on behalf of the entire system. We concur with the observation in the recent meta-evaluation conducted by the World Bank that the recommendations made in the Third System Review ‘on governance and management clashed with vested interests and with the CGIAR culture of consensus decision-making’. The System Office that is being established within the Change Design and Management Team (CDMT) should help matters, but as the World Bank report also notes: ‘...it does not yet go far enough’ and could not be expected to deal, for example, with the System’s need for IPR capacity.

These difficulties, however, should not prevent a long-overdue and well-focussed discussion of partnership strategy and issues between Centres' Directors-General and the CG Secretariat. Our view is that such a *discussion could be especially fruitful if it were structured on the basis of the results of the survey referred to above in a one-day roundtable organised by a carefully-chosen and capable facilitator and involving only the Directors-General, CG Chair and CG Director*. Such an arrangement should encourage candour, an unencumbered focus on key issues, biases and preferences, and the delineation of areas of both solid agreement and disagreement.

5. *With regard to the NGOC, it would appear preferable that the relationship should remain frozen*, at least until the other steps mentioned above have been completed. The current relationship, as we have noted, is seriously damaged and cannot be repaired in the absence of a new, constructive and clear basis for discourse. The steps referred to above with regard to the CG System can contribute as essential components to the establishment of such a new base. This, however, is unlikely to be enough to re-establish mutual confidence, justify the removal of the freeze and place the CGIAR-NGOC relationship on a solid foundation. Additional steps will also be essential on the part of affected and interested parties in Civil Society.
6. *In parallel with the steps suggested to the CG System, we would recommend that past and present members of the NGOC should also take a fresh look at and define its own partnership expectations, requirements and boundary conditions*. As part of this, the NGOC (or alternatively a larger Civil Society grouping that would include some representatives of Farmers' Organisations) might establish an internal consultative commission to examine openly and non-ideologically issues and perspectives on, say, how the precautionary principle might be operationalised with regard to GMOs and IPRs. It might be especially important that such an exercise focus, at least initially, less at the system level and more on the programmes and projects of individual Centres and on specific measures and arrangements for functional cooperation and collaboration between the Centres and Civil Society in the application of the precautionary principle. Approaches such as these could help to catalyse attention away from generalities and abstractions and towards the specifics of and functional requirements for partnerships. In doing so, it would be hoped that such approaches would also open up new spaces for exchange on the nature and boundary conditions for any future constituency-based approaches to partnerships. As part of this and/or antecedent to it, there is every reason to continue the numerous and apparently successful partnerships between individual Centres and Civil Society and to enter into new ones as appropriate.
7. In the same vein, when the NGOC announced its unilateral freeze, it indicated its intention to conduct its own review of the Partnership Committee experience. To the best of our knowledge that has not yet been done, but *we would encourage the NGOC to undertake its own promised and fully independent review*. The approaches indicated above would be an integral part of such a review.

As we have seen, however, the divisions within the NGO community on such issues as IPR and GMO are both horizontal and vertical. The horizontal split may be easier to handle - by stimulating more joint work at the level of individual centres. An important collateral benefit to this should be an enlargement of constituencies within

countries and regions for specific forms of operational partnerships. For the CGIAR, it might also be expected that this would help to expand the functional outreach for the CG System at the local and national level.

These steps, however, would not deal frontally with the ‘big issues’ or large ideological divisions which are the principal sources of the tensions and stress. If these are not also resolved and a framework of mutual trust established on these issues between the CG System, Civil Society and the Private Sector, it is difficult to see how longer-term, stable partnerships can be secured. The incremental approach may offer building blocks that could contribute to establishing multiple spaces for discourse on the larger issues and for exchanges not of the zero-sum-game variety, but this approach will not deal directly (or even necessarily at all) with the larger vertical divisions of a more ideological nature. These will not easily be tackled. Some CGIAR agricultural scientists almost certainly believe that GMO issues should be left essentially in the purview of the scientists themselves, whereas there are those in Civil Society who view all forms of GMO as irretrievably pernicious ***With regard to larger ideological-type divisions, therefore, it is obvious that CG System wide opportunities should also be sought and for a mechanisms established for dialogue on these.*** The recent discussion paper by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, *The Use of Genetically Modified Crops in Developing Countries* might furnish a focal point as it is fixed squarely on key ethical issues that have been at the root of the deepest and most obvious divisions between agricultural scientists and the multinational Private Sector, on the one hand, and Civil Society, some advocacy groups and some leading academics, on the other. As such, the Nuffield paper would seem to offer to CGIAR partnership interests a useful framework for better informed, less polemical and more patient exchange on these matters. ***Accordingly, we would also recommend that new spaces be created for exchanges on an issue by issue basis as delineated in the Nuffield report preceded by careful antecedent investment in the preparation of comprehensive background papers on each issue.***

8. With regard to the PSC, it is hoped that the new time-bound, three year framework that was decided in 2003 will revitalise the work of the Committee and the commitment of its membership. It is also hoped that it will find a much more receptive and responsive environment than prior efforts at the Secretariat and Centres’ levels. This evaluation has noted, however, that, although the main aim of the new programme is to build ‘genuinely functional partnerships’, its identified activities (with the obvious and important exception of a specific proposition for a systematic exchange of scientific researchers between the Centres and the Private Sector) are more a listing of generic areas of general interest than a specific work plan or business plan. For example, the programme’s main aims include ‘to seek specific programme linkages’, ‘to seek to identify and act on complementarities of mutual interest’, ‘to facilitate and increase spaces for policy exchanges’, and ‘to invite, facilitate and support Bellagio-type meetings’. ***We recommend that the new PSC programme be ‘market tested’ over the next 2-4 years with the market test being the determination of whether the PSC and its programme have genuine interlocutors within the CG system. This, we suggest, should be accomplished via the conversion of the PSC programme into a specific work plan which would include an activities profile, specification of ‘end points’, milestones and a framework for ongoing evaluation.*** The market test will help to determine the extent to which genuine and functional programme and project collaboration can be

established. The relatively new Challenge Programme may offer a particular opportunity for such a determination. The international Private Sector will not and should not continue to commit to the PSC partnership arrangement if a genuine product market cannot be established. Such determination is equally imperative for the CG System.

9. Governance of the partnerships between the CG System, the PSC and the NGOC has involved inclusion of constituency membership on the Council of the CG, with one designated representative of each Committee. It is unequivocally clear from the interview and questionnaire surveys that were carried out during this evaluation that this model of representation and governance is subject to deep contestation with a strong majority opposed to voting membership on either a PSC or NGOC constituency basis, not least because the designated council members could not claim representativeness.

This suggests a possible distinction between shareholder and stakeholder. The governing bodies of several United Nations agencies, for example, now include both shareholders (the representatives of the nation-states that contribute financially to and which are ultimately liable for the operations of these agencies) with voting rights and stakeholders (mainly representatives of Civil Society) as contributors and observers but without voting rights. The governing structure of the Global Environmental Facility also assigns any voting rights exclusively to financial shareholders but it also provides an annual forum for exchange with other interested and affected parties and encourages observer involvement in its governance sessions.

This raises the question of what governance framework would best serve the future interests of the CG System, bearing in mind the extent and strength of solidly negative views held with regard to the current arrangement equating constituency to voting shareholder. ***The evaluation team debated this matter extensively but was unable to arrive at a common judgement.*** On the one hand, we see merit in the argument that the CG Executive Council should be constituted only by those with financial liability for the CG System, who represent a clearly defined constituency and are in a position to speak for that constituency. Such arrangements would in no way obviate the kind of spokesperson-observer status mentioned with regard to certain UN agencies or the differentiated stakeholder-shareholder spaces provided by the GEF model. On the other hand, we can also see merit in a blurring of this kind of differentiation, for its foundation is in essence that those who pay are those who vote, perhaps a somewhat antiquated notion at best. A key issue in our view is whether/how the role of the stakeholder could be expanded and incorporated into larger functional partnerships.

***Accordingly, we would recommend that an especially prudent and cautious posture be adopted on governance structures for the CGIAR, especially with regard to any claims for governance membership on a constituency basis.*** As part of such a posture, consideration might also be given to establishing clear rules of engagement and codes of conduct for those who might be invited to serve as members of CG governing bodies.

## 6.5 Concluding Remarks

Although the CGIAR's two committee experiment in partnerships via constituency approaches has to date proved generally disappointing to all parties, we would nevertheless wish to underscore the importance of persevering with the experiment. There is much that can and should be learned and internalised from the experience since 1995 and this can furnish a better foundation for extending the relationship with the PSC and re-generating it with the NGOC. The PSC has committed to a three-year work plan during which period its work should be 'market tested' both at the system and individual Centre levels. A negative market test should invite and initiate a profound and fundamental transformation of the entire relationship, but not to its abandonment, for the underlying assumption that launched the experience at Lucerne remains valid: the CGIAR needs to work together with the international Private Sector in mobilising its energies, talents, complementary core capabilities and agility in the interests of poor people and poverty reduction. Similarly, we would like to underscore the need for strong relationships between the CG system and international Civil Society. It is important to persist in this effort, notwithstanding the disappointment, rejection and even anger that the experience to date has generated on all sides. As we have attempted to point out in this evaluation, the issue is to build a process, which is predicated on clarity of purpose, mandate and structures for effective and accountable operations. This does not mean that the expectations should be modest, or that the voices should not be diverse and even discordant. It only means that there must be a basic willingness to work through the processes and to find ways of measuring successes and failures against agreed yardsticks. These measurable goalposts are important, not just for the dialogue partners, but for the community outside as it helps build public scrutiny and more importantly nurtures public constituencies and confidence.

If agricultural research is to respond adequately to human needs in this century, institutional innovation, enormous scientific breakthroughs and creative energies at both the macro and micro levels will be imperative. The challenge is to build the relationships and create the new spaces required for this between the CGIAR as a global institution, the international Private Sector and the informal knowledge community of change-makers. Nothing in this report should be interpreted as detracting from this challenge. The CGIAR needs the Civil Society and the Private Sector, not for legitimacy or for public relations reasons, but for seriously learning and successfully implementing its own diverse and complicated agenda to support poor farming communities worldwide and achieve global food security in sustainable ways.



# APPENDIX A

## QUESTIONNAIRE CGIAR REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEES (PRIVATE SECTOR AND NGO)

|                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Your name: _____ | Position/Title _____ |
| Address: _____   | Telephone _____      |
| _____            | E-mail _____         |
| _____            |                      |
| _____            |                      |

May we contact you for a follow-up telephone interview? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

### PART ONE

#### The Private Sector Committee (PSC)

1. An examination of CGIAR documents dating back to those prepared for the Lucerne meeting of 1995 indicates a number of major objectives that were either assigned to or assumed by the PSC. Several of these are listed below. Your perception/perspective of each of these is requested with regard to three factors: (a) Importance/Relevance; (b) Realism/Achievability (whether the Objective is realistic/achievable); and (c) Progress to date (extent to which progress has been made since the PSC was established).

#### **Objective 1:**

**‘The PSC will act to facilitate private sector provision to the CGIAR of biotechnology tools (and also markers, genes and traits).’** Please provide your assessment of this objective (check one for each of the three factors; from 1 to 5):

|                              |         |         |         |                                 |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Importance/Relevance</b>  |         |         |         |                                 |
| 1 _____                      | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____ | 5 _____                         |
| Very Low                     |         | Medium  |         | Very High                       |
|                              |         |         |         | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |
| <b>Realism/Achievability</b> |         |         |         |                                 |
| 1 _____                      | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____ | 5 _____                         |
| Very Low                     |         | Medium  |         | Very High                       |
|                              |         |         |         | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |
| <b>Progress to Date</b>      |         |         |         |                                 |
| 1 _____                      | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____ | 5 _____                         |
| Very Low                     |         | Medium  |         | Very High                       |
|                              |         |         |         | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

Comments (Optional):

.....  
.....

.....  
.....Use separate page as required.

**Objective 2:**

**‘The PSC will advise CG Centres on legal matters, particularly IPR issues.’** Please provide your assessment of this objective in terms of (check one for each of the three factors; from 1 to 5):

|                             |         |         |         |                   |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| <b>Importance/Relevance</b> |         |         |         |                   |
| 1 _____                     | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____ | 5 _____           |
| Very Low                    |         | Medium  |         | Very High         |
|                             |         |         |         | Don't know/ _____ |
|                             |         |         |         | No Opinion        |

|                              |         |         |         |                   |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| <b>Realism/Achievability</b> |         |         |         |                   |
| 1 _____                      | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____ | 5 _____           |
| Very Low                     |         | Medium  |         | Very High         |
|                              |         |         |         | Don't know/ _____ |
|                              |         |         |         | No Opinion        |

|                         |         |         |         |                   |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| <b>Progress to Date</b> |         |         |         |                   |
| 1 _____                 | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____ | 5 _____           |
| Very Low                |         | Medium  |         | Very High         |
|                         |         |         |         | Don't know/ _____ |
|                         |         |         |         | No Opinion        |

Comments (Optional):  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....Use separate page as required.

**Objective 3:**

**‘PSC will serve the CGIAR as an clearing house and source of strategic information on contacts within the private sector.’** Please provide your assessment of this objective in terms of (check one for each of the three factors; from 1 to 5):

|                             |         |         |         |                   |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| <b>Importance/Relevance</b> |         |         |         |                   |
| 1 _____                     | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____ | 5 _____           |
| Very Low                    |         | Medium  |         | Very High         |
|                             |         |         |         | Don't know/ _____ |
|                             |         |         |         | No Opinion        |

|                              |         |         |         |                   |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| <b>Realism/Achievability</b> |         |         |         |                   |
| 1 _____                      | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____ | 5 _____           |
| Very Low                     |         | Medium  |         | Very High         |
|                              |         |         |         | Don't know/ _____ |
|                              |         |         |         | No Opinion        |

|                         |         |         |         |                   |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|
| <b>Progress to Date</b> |         |         |         |                   |
| 1 _____                 | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____ | 5 _____           |
| Very Low                |         | Medium  |         | Very High         |
|                         |         |         |         | Don't know/ _____ |
|                         |         |         |         | No Opinion        |

Comments (Optional):  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....Use separate page as required.

**Objective 4:**

**‘The PSC will develop an inventory and suggest individuals for membership on CG Boards.’**

Please provide your assessment of this objective in terms of (check one for each of the three factors; from 1 to 5):

| <b>Importance/Relevance</b> |   |        |   |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1                           | 2 | 3      | 4 | 5                               |
| Very<br>Low                 |   | Medium |   | Very<br>High                    |
|                             |   |        |   | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

| <b>Realism/Achievability</b> |   |        |   |                                 |
|------------------------------|---|--------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1                            | 2 | 3      | 4 | 5                               |
| Very<br>Low                  |   | Medium |   | Very<br>High                    |
|                              |   |        |   | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

| <b>Progress to Date</b> |   |        |   |                                 |
|-------------------------|---|--------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1                       | 2 | 3      | 4 | 5                               |
| Very<br>Low             |   | Medium |   | Very<br>High                    |
|                         |   |        |   | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

Comments (Optional):

.....  
 .....  
 .....

.....Use separate page as required.

**Objective 5:**

**‘The PSC will seek to increase the constituency of support for the CGIAR by actively promoting its interests within the private sector.’**

Please provide your assessment of this objective in terms of (check one for each of the three factors; from 1 to 5):

| <b>Importance/Relevance</b> |   |        |   |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1                           | 2 | 3      | 4 | 5                               |
| Very<br>Low                 |   | Medium |   | Very<br>High                    |
|                             |   |        |   | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

| <b>Realism/Achievability</b> |   |        |   |                                 |
|------------------------------|---|--------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1                            | 2 | 3      | 4 | 5                               |
| Very<br>Low                  |   | Medium |   | Very<br>High                    |
|                              |   |        |   | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

| <b>Progress to Date</b> |   |        |   |                                 |
|-------------------------|---|--------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1                       | 2 | 3      | 4 | 5                               |
| Very<br>Low             |   | Medium |   | Very<br>High                    |
|                         |   |        |   | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

Comments (Optional):

.....  
 .....  
 .....

.....Use separate page as required.

**Objective 6:**

**‘The PSC will engage in an ongoing dialogue with the CGIAR on common policy questions.’**

Please provide your assessment of this objective in terms of (check one for each of the three factors; from 1 to 5):

**Importance/Relevance**

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Very Low                      Medium                      Very High                      Don't know/ \_\_\_\_\_  
No Opinion

**Realism/Achievability**

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Very Low                      Medium                      Very High                      Don't know/ \_\_\_\_\_  
No Opinion

**Progress to Date**

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Very Low                      Medium                      Very High                      Don't know/ \_\_\_\_\_  
No Opinion

Comments (Optional):  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....Use separate page as required.

2. In 1997, the PSC undertook an overview of possible biotechnology partnerships between the CGIAR and the private sector. Its report presents a broad framework of considerations and factors that could either facilitate or impede such partnerships. The PSC, however, subsequently expressed disappointment at what it interpreted as a relative absence of discussion, follow-up and take-up on the part of the CGIAR. This experience seems to have discouraged the PSC from the further studies of possible partnerships which had been proposed in areas such as integrated crop management, post-harvest technology, information dissemination and genetic enhancement of orphan crops.

Do you think that there are lessons to be learned from this experience? Does this suggest different approaches to partnerships? Should partnership studies on the basis of general and generic issues such as biotechnology be replaced or complemented by other approaches?

Comments:  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....Use separate page as required.

3. A perception that seems to emerge through the biannual meetings of the PSC is that its work and the value of any potential partnerships have been limited by the fact that its linkages have been mainly at the System level (i.e. through the Secretariat) and insufficiently with the scientists and managers of individual Centres. Is this in your view a fair and accurate perspective? Why/why not?

Comments:  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....Use separate page as required.

4. What do you regard as the main benefits/advantages to the CGIAR that have resulted from the PSC?

Comments:

.....  
.....  
.....Use  
separate page as required.

5. What do you regard as the main disadvantages/weaknesses for the CGIAR that have resulted from the PSC?

Comments:

.....  
.....  
.....Use  
separate page as required.

6. What do you regard as the main barriers to effective partnerships between the CGIAR and the private sector?

Comments:

.....  
.....  
.....Use  
separate page as required.

7. Please indicate the extend of your agreement with the following questions:

a) The number of private sector representatives on the CGIAR Council should be increased in order that the CGIAR may connect more directly with the dramatic expansion in science, especially biotechnology, that is being led by industry.

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- No opinion
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

b) Representation on the CGIAR Council should be strictly limited to countries and organisations that provide financial support to the work of the CGIAR.

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- No opinion
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

c) There may have been problems, but the PSC has increased awareness throughout the international private sector of the CGIAR and its work and this is of significant value.

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- No opinion
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

d) The CGIAR's partnerships committees have served to draw attention to irreconcilable differences of viewpoints between public good and private gain. The policy spaces to bridge these viewpoints can never be found.

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- No opinion
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

e) The CGIAR simply must find the means to ensure that the PSC functions well as this is imperative to the purposes and long-term health of the CGIAR system as a whole.

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- No opinion
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

f) Partnerships between the CGIAR and the private sector would best be left to be formed by individual Centres on a case by case and project by project basis. The partnerships that are important and that can work are less likely to emerge from a global partnerships committee.

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- No opinion
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

8. Do you have any suggestions for modifications to the structure and functioning of the PSC that would improve its utility and impact? Please give reasons.

Comments:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....Use separate page as  
required.

**END OF PART ONE**

**PART TWO**  
**Non-Governmental Organisation Committee (NGOC)**

10. When the NGOC was established in 1995, it set three overriding objectives for itself. These are summarised below. Your perception/perspective of each is requested with regard to three factors: (a)- importance/relevance; (b)- whether the objective is realistic/achievable; and (c)- extent to which progress has been made since the NGOC was established.

**Objective 1:**

**‘To promote a people-centred approach to research and development of environmentally, socially and economically sustainable agriculture’.** Please provide your assessment of this objective in terms of (check one for each of the three factors; from 1 to 5):

| <b>Importance/Relevance</b> |         |         |           |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 1 _____                     | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____   | 5 _____                         |
| Very Low                    | Medium  |         | Very High | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

| <b>Realism/Achievability</b> |         |         |           |                                 |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 1 _____                      | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____   | 5 _____                         |
| Very Low                     | Medium  |         | Very High | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

| <b>Progress to Date</b> |         |         |           |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 1 _____                 | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____   | 5 _____                         |
| Very Low                | Medium  |         | Very High | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

Comments (Optional):  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....Use separate page as required.

**Objective 2:**

**‘To contribute to mutual understanding between the CGIAR and NGOs, including the farmer, herder/pastoralists and fisherfolk organisations they support, on issues of common interest and concern.’** Please provide your assessment of this objective in terms of (check one for each of the three factors; from 1 to 5):

| <b>Importance/Relevance</b> |         |         |           |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 1 _____                     | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____   | 5 _____                         |
| Very Low                    | Medium  |         | Very High | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

| <b>Realism/Achievability</b> |         |         |           |                                 |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 1 _____                      | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____   | 5 _____                         |
| Very Low                     | Medium  |         | Very High | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

| <b>Progress to Date</b> |         |         |           |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 1 _____                 | 2 _____ | 3 _____ | 4 _____   | 5 _____                         |
| Very Low                | Medium  |         | Very High | Don't know/ _____<br>No Opinion |

Comments (Optional):  
 .....  
 .....Use separate page as required.

**Objective 3:**

**‘To facilitate two-way communication between the CGIAR and civil society, especially the NGO community.’** Please provide your assessment of this objective in terms of (check one for each of the three factors; from 1 to 5):

**Importance/Relevance**

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Very Low                      Medium                      Very High                      Don't know/ \_\_\_\_\_  
No Opinion

**Realism/Achievability**

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Very Low                      Medium                      Very High                      Don't know/ \_\_\_\_\_  
No Opinion

**Progress to Date**

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Very Low                      Medium                      Very High                      Don't know/ \_\_\_\_\_  
No Opinion

Comments (Optional):  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....Use separate page as required.

11. With regard to its **membership**, NGOC state that: **‘The composition of the NGOC is meant to be balanced with respect to geographic coverage; thematic interest (macro-policy issues and farm-level concerns); outreach capability (to reach global, regional and national networks of NGOs); and gender. Members serve in their personal capacity, not as representatives of special interests or specific constituencies, but are expected to consult with civil society organisations and bring their concerns into the CGIAR.’**

From your perspective and experience, to what extent has the NGOC achieved these aims of balanced composition and extensive consultation (choose one)?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Very Limited                      Medium                      To a Large Extent

Comment:  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....(Add additional page as required)

12. The Report to the CGIAR's 2002 Annual General Meeting by the NGOC includes its self-assessment of progress to that date. The self-assessment concluded with the following statement of two big challenges that had not been fully met and that continued to require attention:

**‘The two biggest challenges for the NGOC remain**

**(a) Lack of a widely mobilised constituency and therefore inadequate reflection of the wide range of perspectives within civil society, and**



**(b) The difficulty of persuading the CGIAR to recognise the strength of opinion from Civil Society about the changes required in research in order to address the needs of smallholder farmers.'**

To what extent do you agree with the above statement? How do you react/respond to **both** (a) and (b), above? What is your assessment of their validity and wider significance?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....(Add additional pages as required)

13. In October 2002 the NGOC announced a 'freeze' on its relations with the CGIAR at the system level and indicated that it would be conducting its own assessment of whether and on what basis to continue the partnership. At least in part, the basic reason for the freeze is the NGOC's view that the search for partnerships with the private sector undermines the public role of the CGIAR. Three specific factors were presented by the NGOC in support of the freeze, as follows:

**'The NGOC notes that the CGIAR and its Centres have:**

- **Failed to support an immediate moratorium on the release of GM crops.....The CGIAR has also failed to initiate scientific work to assess the risks and biosafety requirements necessary to protect the genetic integrity of landraces on-farm, their ownership and the livelihoods of resource-poor farmers....'**
- **Failed to uphold, in the face of increased private control and monopolisation of genes through IPRs, the principle of the FAO-CGIAR Trust agreement that requires all germplasm and its genetic parts and components, currently in the CGIAR gene banks to be kept in the public domain.**
- **Actively been promoting genetic engineering technologies and products, which are incompatible with farmer-led agroecological research, and will lead to further marginalisation of farming communities.'**

What is your reaction/interpretation of the above statement? What can/should the CGIAR do in order to respond to the concerns raised by the NGOC? Do you have any solutions that you would propose in order to re-establish the CG's frozen partnership with the NGOC?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....(Add additional pages as required)

14. Which of the following statements most closely accords with your assessment of the value of the contribution made since 1995 by the NGOC to the work of the CRIAR? (choose one only)

- The contribution of the NGOC to the work of the CGIAR has been
- Essential to the work and credibility of the CGIAR in the face of new international realities.
  - Of considerable and increasing value to the work and credibility of the CGIAR.
  - Limited, but this is an experiment in partnership and it needs to be given more time and patience to develop.

- Of almost no value to the CGIAR, but it is a necessary evil and political correctness requires that the partnership committee should continue.
- Negative. The costs, including transactions costs, far outweigh the benefits. It should be discontinued.

Comment

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....(Additional pages as required).

15. What do you regard as the main advantages, benefits and accomplishments of the NGOC?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....(Additional pages as required)

16. What do you regard as the main disadvantages and costs of the NGOC?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....(Additional pages as required)

17. Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following questions:

a) The number of NGO representatives on the CGIAR Council should be increased in order to ensure a greater voice for civil society in the governance of the CGIAR.

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- No opinion
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

b) Representation on the CGIAR Council should be strictly limited to countries and organisations that provide financial support to the work of the CGIAR.

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- No opinion
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

c) There may have been problems, but the NGOC has increased awareness throughout international civil society of the CGIAR and its work and this is of significant value.

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree

- No opinion
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

d) The CGIAR's partnerships committees have served to draw attention to irreconcilable differences of viewpoints between public good and private gain. The policy spaces to bridge these viewpoints can never be found.

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- No opinion
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

e) The CGIAR simply must find the means to re-establish the functioning of the NGOC as this is imperative to the purposes and long-term health of the CGIAR system as a whole.

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- No opinion
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree

f) Partnerships between the CGIAR and NGOs would best be left to be formed by individual Centres on a case by case and project by project basis. The partnerships that are important and that can work are less likely to emerge from a global partnerships committee.

- Strongly agree
- Moderately agree
- No opinion
- Moderately disagree
- Strongly disagree



