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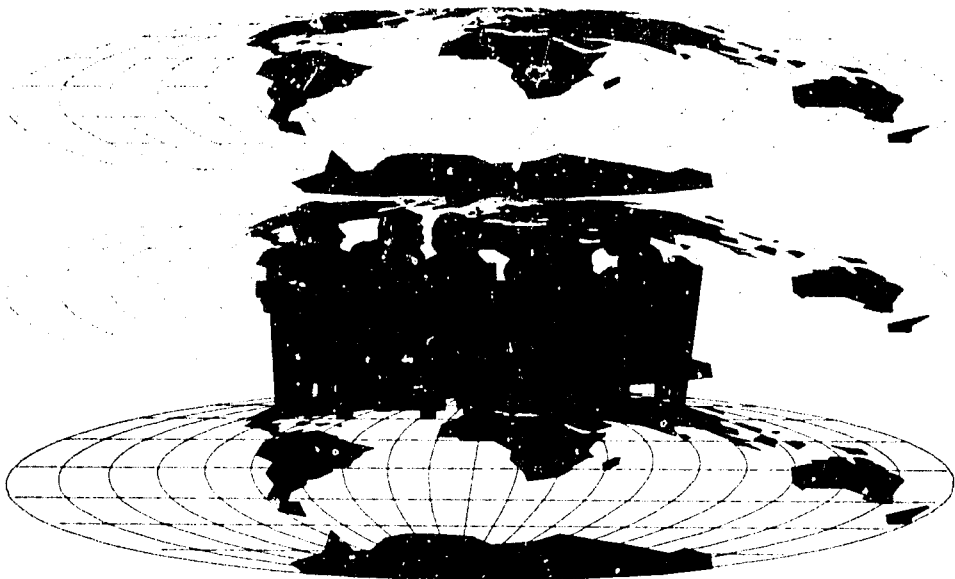
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Future Challenges for National Agricultural Research: A Policy Dialogue

**Proceedings of the international conference
*Challenges and Opportunities for the NARS
in the Year 2000: A Policy Dialogue***

Berlin, 12-18 January 1992



ISNAR

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Sponsors:

**International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR)
The Hague, The Netherlands**

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Workshop Conclusions and Recommendations

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In presenting the summary report, Dr. Howard Elliott recalled that the objective of the workshop had been to engage in a policy dialogue between policymakers and research leaders. It was inspired by the need for a strong global agricultural research effort, based on strong national research systems, to meet the challenges of the new millennium. Presentations had been structured around the idea that policies, technological opportunities, and institutions must interact if we are to achieve growth, alleviate poverty, sustain production resources, and safeguard the environment. Success cannot be achieved if any one of these is ignored.

The final plenary session brought together the principal ideas discussed during the workshop, concentrated on defining roles in the emerging global research system, and made specific recommendations to the actors present.

There was general consensus on the following points:

- The emerging global research system is being driven by a number of trends, which include the following:
 - political and economic integration at both the global and regional levels;
 - a broadened agenda requiring research solutions;
 - the growing maturity of NARS;
 - changes in science and information technology;
 - the need to include new institutions in the research process.

Note: A summary of the presentations and discussions of the workshop can be found in the companion publication, "Highlights of a Policy Dialogue: Future Challenges for National Agricultural Research," published by ISNAR in March of 1992.

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- The revised agenda for the global research system will require adjustments in institutional structures, mechanisms, and policies on the part of all participants and stakeholders in the system, including the donors who fund it. New partnerships and alliances will have to be formed.
- The common task of all those present is to produce innovations that serve clearly defined goals, not just to carry out research *per se*. This requires the creation of an enabling environment for technology development and adoption. Attention must be given to the entire system and its linkages, since agricultural research cannot be separate from (and perform better over the long term than) the environment in which it works.
- The CGIAR system is recognized as a small part of the global research system and of research focusing on developing countries. It should not be seen as an aid organization or as a vehicle for passing resources through to national systems. Its long-term vision calls for it to work on research of a global nature and to produce "international public goods." Its evolution towards this goal depends on the existence of strong national research systems. It must function as an excellent research system and should not be called upon to perform tasks for which it does not have a comparative advantage.
- Regional entities and regional mechanisms, emerging from the bottom-up demand of national systems, are playing a role in the transition to the long-term vision of the CGIAR.
- There is a need for structures and mechanisms to harmonize the roles of the actors in the system. These will involve changes in the *internal* operating style of NARS, regional entities, the CGIAR, international centers, and donors, as well as accommodations in the way they *interact* with each other.
- Not all NARS and regions are homogeneous. The structures and mechanisms developed must take this into account so that there are no "orphans" in the global system.

Recommendations

The final plenary discussion generated a number of specific recommendations for each of the participants present at the meeting. These are summarized below.

Specific recommendations for NARS and national policymakers

- Create a capacity to influence the policy dialogue on issues like intellectual property rights, GATT negotiations, and domestic policies influencing

the success of technology generation and adoption.

- Recognize that donors deal with sovereign governments, and these must ultimately assume responsibility for the agreements they make.
- Recognize the special characteristics of research in responding to structural adjustment pressures. Be prepared to use structural adjustment to make the necessary adjustments in the research system but do not let blanket measures destroy long-term research and break up productive research teams. How restructuring is implemented is an internal policy debate.
- Be innovative in seeking new sources of funding at national and regional levels. This involves analyzing potential sources of taxation and the incidence of taxes on incentives and efficiency, as well as revenue.
- Strengthen linkages with national universities. Help the educational system mobilize support for its needs and redefine its role in relation to agricultural research.
- Strengthen collaboration with other NARS.
- Assert control collectively and individually over the agenda of networks and other entities purporting to serve NARS.
- Build a scheme into project design to evaluate the impact of research.

Specific recommendations for regional programs and organizations

- Create structures and mechanisms that ensure that programs are guided by the NARS they serve.
- Assist NARS in harmonizing their policy objectives and creating the enabling environment in which they work.
- Take leadership in subregional roles of technical service and harmonizing policies of a transnational (but regional) nature.
- Ensure that the role of facilitator is not one of gatekeeper to the region.
- Ensure institutional stability by remaining small in size so that resources are not diverted from NARS.

Specific recommendations for the CGIAR and TAC

- Ratify the long-term vision of the CGIAR system. Make sure that the productivity objective is not unduly discounted in the priority-weighting scheme used in strategizing. The task of feeding eight billion people by the year 2025 will still require strong attention to production.
- Ensure better representation of NARS in the guidance and governance of the CG system. This includes consultation with subregional organizations as representatives of NARS, if NARS cannot be consulted individually.
- Review relations between IARCs and NARS and the ways they can be improved.
- Encourage individual IARCs to serve as catalysts between NARS and their sources of funding.
- Participate with NARS in informing and influencing policymakers on technological policy issues.

Specific recommendations for ISNAR

- Update and increase the flow of information to research leaders and policymakers about NARS.
- Advise NARS on the implications of structural adjustment policies and help them demonstrate to policymakers the long-term danger of institutional instability and loss of human capital resulting from shortsighted policies.
- Assist NARS in master planning for research at the national level.
- Develop methodologies for planning in a regional context, stressing the complementarities among NARS.
- Help NARS manage change.
- Adopt a clear strategy towards the development and use of partner organizations and individuals as “multipliers” of ISNAR’s impact.

Specific recommendations for donors

- Develop funding mechanisms that will facilitate the sharing of responsibilities in the changing global system. Donors must collaborate. Multilateral and bilateral sources of funding must come together to encourage partnerships among institutions working at the global, regional, and national levels.

- Strengthen regional funding mechanisms to facilitate partnerships among NARS and their collaborators.
- Earmark a fixed percentage of agricultural development projects to research, not only to include support for research for a project's immediate needs, but also to provide for the results that development will require in later years.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Jean Ndikumana, speaking for the African participants, expressed the hope that ISNAR would continue to give strong priority to the region, that the recommendations of this dialogue would serve as guidelines for action, and that they should be disseminated widely to research leaders and policymakers. He stressed the importance of continued collaboration with ISNAR in priority setting, establishing institutional mechanisms for involving users in research planning, developing national agricultural research master plans in each country, and strengthening networks.

Dr. Shen Jinpu underlined the importance of policy issues. For the Asian region, cost-reducing technology and research to increase the value-added in agriculture were taking on particular importance. The larger Asian NARS could make strong contributions in biotechnology, while building on their strength in conventional research. However, he noted that regional collaboration remained weak and called for partners in international research to help foster greater collaboration among NARS. Training at the postdoctoral level will continue to be a priority, as will training the next generation of NARS leaders in management. He encouraged ISNAR to do more in the Asian region, concentrating on assistance in developing and applying new management methods, undertaking studies of experience in the region, and sharing this knowledge among NARS. Through partnerships in the region, both ISNAR and the NARS can learn and share.

Dr. Mario Contreras noted that our discussions confirmed that we share a common objective. However, regions and subregions are different and respond to external forces in different ways. The liberalization of trade generates needs for new and different technologies. Large NARS in Latin America are moving to assume responsibilities previously ensured by international centers. Small NARS are accentuating their collaborative alliances. And all NARS will need to manage change and become more entrepreneurial.

Mr. Hussein Faraj emphasized that West Asia and North Africa need agricultural research. The task is for research leaders to market their product better and to convince policymakers of the need for research and their interest in supporting it. This would require permanent mechanisms for a dialogue between researchers and policymakers. This meeting had

demonstrated the value of such a dialogue.

Dr. Christian Bonte-Friedheim recalled the three possible crises he mentioned in opening the workshop. Our deliberations confirmed that there is no justification for complacency. He thanked the participants for making this a South-South dialogue and the resource persons for helping this to come about. He expressed the hope that research would be both wanted because it is needed and needed because it is wanted. In thanking the German Government and DSE for their collaboration, he looked forward to a future dialogue in similar circumstances two years hence which would help keep the issue of support to developing countries high on the agenda of the developed countries.

Dr. E. Kruesken, on behalf of DSE, felt that associating a policy dialogue with Green Week was a good idea. The exposition demonstrated the results of research at the consumer level and the importance it has played in the exports of the developing countries represented. DSE will continue to play its part in strengthening research by organizing dialogues of this type that can help develop a constituency for research among developed-country taxpayers. It will continue to use its skills in organizing and facilitating conferences to bring this about.

In closing the workshop, **Major-General Majid Ul-Haq, Minister of Agriculture for Bangladesh**, described how he had come to the decision to devote a full week to attend this dialogue. The communications gap between research and policymakers and between North and South needs to be bridged. Such an event has proven the value of organized dialogue on how policy formulation can interact with technical matters. In formally closing the meeting, he expressed the hope that ISNAR would collaborate even more intensely with national systems and that international agencies would provide ISNAR with the resources to meet the expectations of the NARS.