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Report of a Seminar

Women and Agricultural Technology: Relevance for Research

Volume 1 – Analyses and Conclusions

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The Rockefeller Foundation

International Service for National Agricultural Research

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Women and Agricultural Technology: Relevance for Research

Volume 1 – Analyses and Conclusions

Report from the CGIAR Inter-Center Seminar
on Women and Agricultural Technology

Bellagio, Italy, 25 to 29 March 1985

July 1985

The Rockefeller Foundation

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International Service for National Agricultural Research
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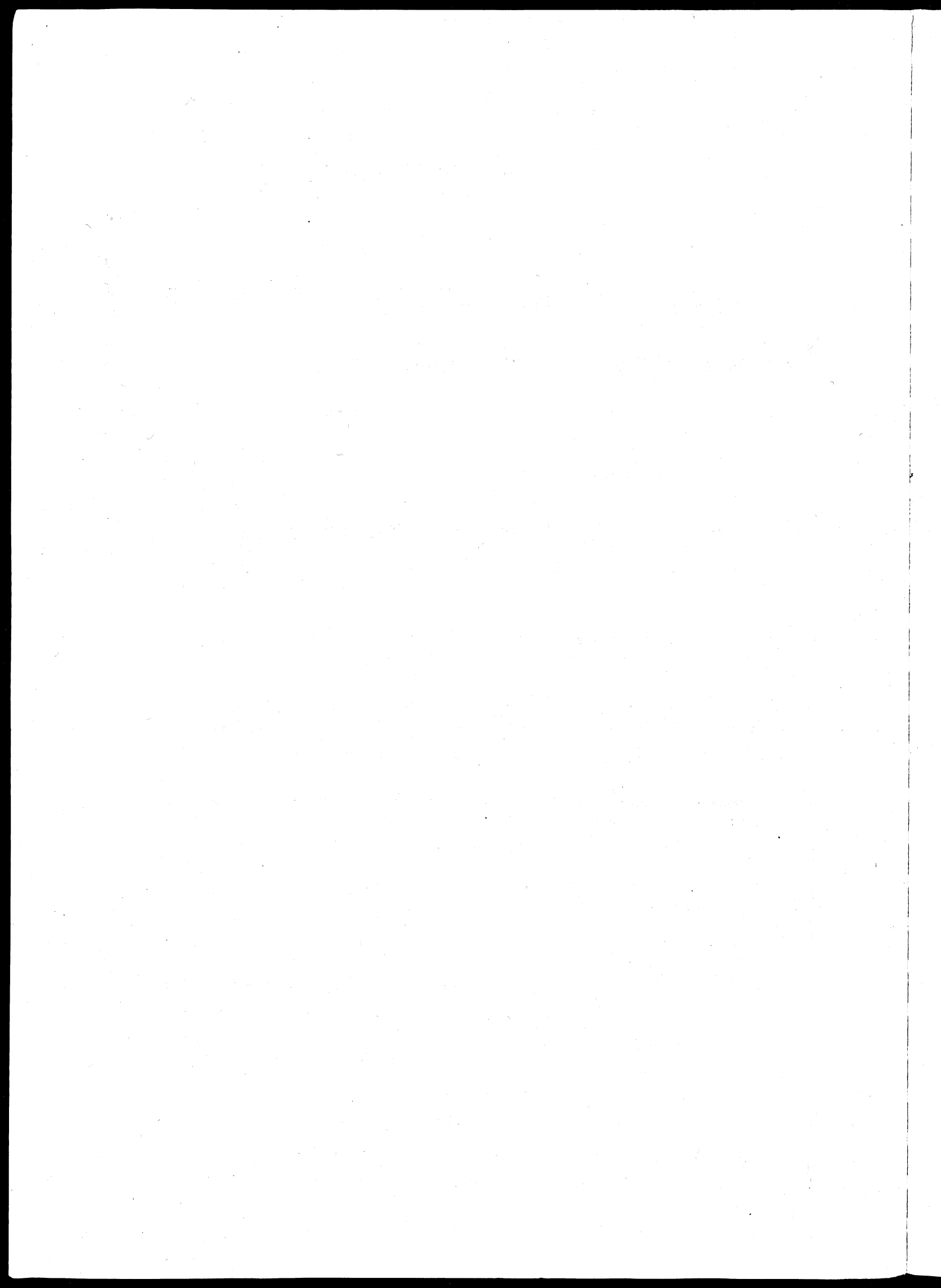


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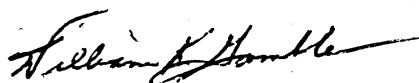
Preface

An inter-center seminar of the members of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) was held at the Rockefeller Conference Center at Bellagio, Italy on March 25-29, 1985. Participants included the directors-general or representatives from the international centers, the CGIAR secretariat, and the Technical Advisory Committee; the president and representatives of the Rockefeller Foundation; and experts with research experience on the role of women in agricultural development in the less-developed countries. The objectives of the seminar were to assess the current activities in the centers related to a more effective integration of women in the modernization of agriculture and to seek possible ways of improving the performance of the CGIAR system on this issue.

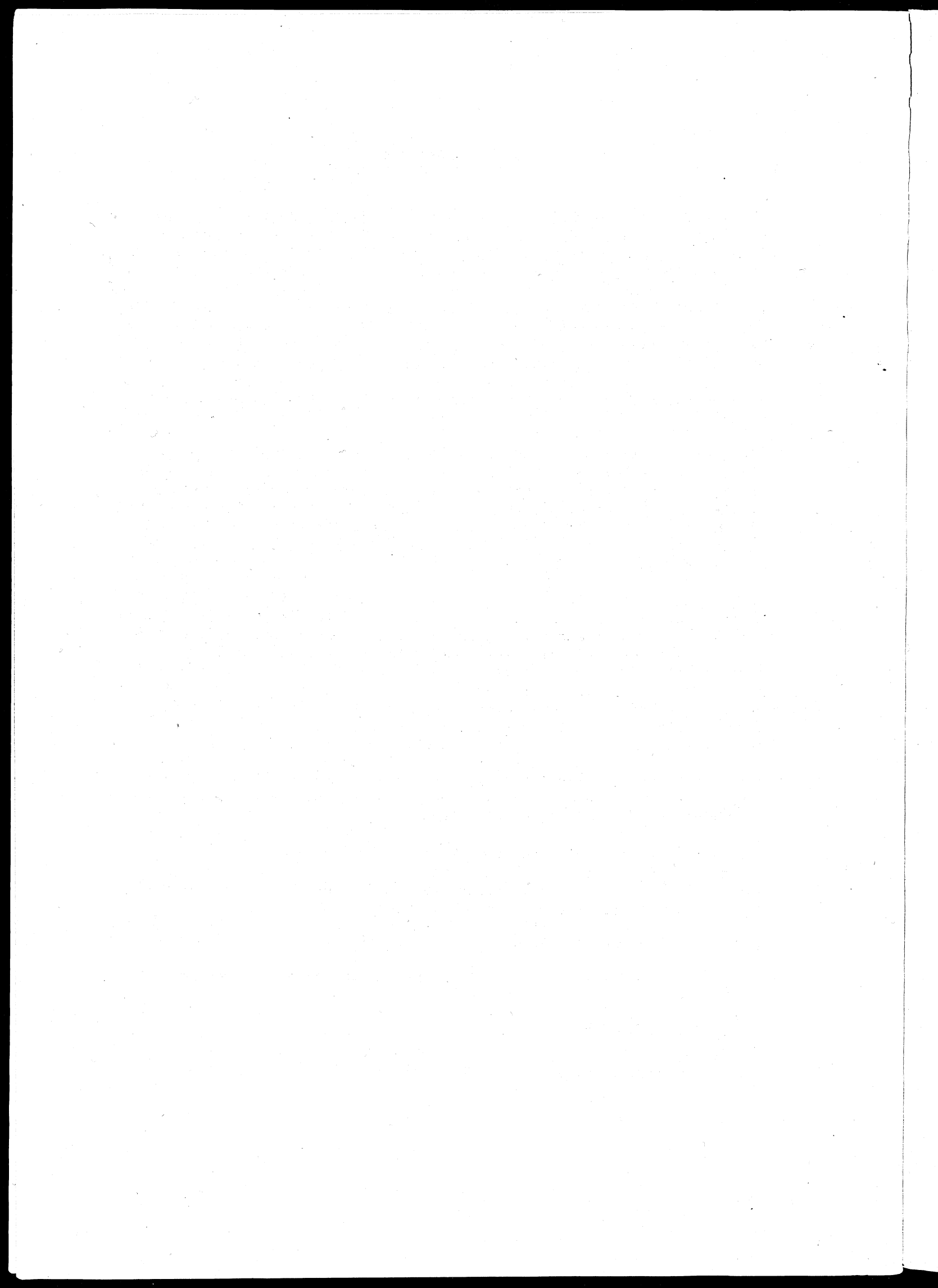
The seminar was co-sponsored by the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) and the Rockefeller Foundation. It is a follow-up activity to a conference on Women and Rice Farming Systems held at IRRI in September 1983, which recommended that a meeting be organized at the senior CGIAR level to discuss how the international research centers could most effectively build upon the important roles that women play in agriculture.

The seminar's structure sought to emphasize analytical presentations and discussion. A background document, distributed to the participants well before the seminar, included papers written by each center to describe its past and current activities related to the seminar topic, and regional reviews of women-oriented research. This made it possible to begin the seminar with a limited number of analytical (rather than descriptive) presentations followed by discussion periods. A panel focused on the particular characteristics of the categories of female producers and beneficiaries of research. The participants also met twice in small groups for more in-depth discussion of specific issues and to prepare suggestions for future action. These suggestions were further discussed during the final plenary session, and the conclusions presented here were approved by all participants.

The seminar report is in two volumes. This volume includes the seminar presentations and the final statement prepared by the participants. Volume II, Experiences in International and National Research, is a reprint of the background document distributed to the seminar participants under the title "The Users' Perspective in International and National Agricultural Research".



William K. Gamble,
Director General, ISNAR



Concluding Statement

The papers prepared by the centers for this seminar confirm that the centers are already engaged in many activities that concern the female producers and other beneficiaries of research. The participants agreed that the seminar had been an opportunity to take stock and share this important information. However, there are gaps, and increased attention to women as farmers or beneficiaries of research seems to be an important consideration, recognizing that there are great differences among continents, among countries, and within countries, and that in some areas other priorities must also be considered.

The participants agreed that issues related to a changing agriculture should be approached within the framework of a dynamic process and not within a framework that maintains the status quo. Women and other potential beneficiaries of agricultural research should be given, in a situation of agricultural change, the opportunity to share fully in its benefits by presenting them with choices of suitable agricultural technology. This implies that those generating agricultural technology pay explicit, ex ante attention to the potential impacts/uses of technological options developed. Where this examination results in the conclusion that some women's opportunities and choices will be narrowed by the introduction of this technology, additional attention should be directed to ensuring that such reduction of women's opportunities is not inevitable and that women are not placed into a marginal position as a result of technological change. Eventually, alternative income-producing opportunities may need to be developed to prevent damage to some individuals, while encouraging changes beneficial to society as a whole.

From the discussion there appeared to be agreement on the following points.

A. AFFIRMATION OF THE RELEVANCE OF WOMEN'S ISSUES TO RESEARCH

1. Gender is an important variable in distinguishing among potential beneficiary groups for agricultural technology research and policy analysis in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
2. Female farmers are far from homogeneous and can be divided into at least three categories:
 - a. direct producers of crops and livestock;
 - b. participants in the family farm by processing, marketing, storing, and preparing food;
 - c. wage laborers.

In addition, women form an important category of urban consumers.

3. Within these categories, women's needs and potential for change depend on their socio-economic circumstances and their unique responsibilities in child care and household maintenance. The multiple work responsibilities of women, with the resultant time restraints, may be particularly important factors in determining the acceptability of new technology. This consideration is especially relevant for Africa, where women are often primarily responsible for smallholder food crop production. In Asia and Latin America, technological choice on certain types of small farm enterprise may also be strongly influenced by the work load and preferences of women.

B. COMPLEMENTARITY OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

1. The issue of women's participation in agricultural development is much broader than what can be addressed by agricultural research but the influence of the CGIAR system, while limited, can be important and should not be ignored. Specifically, there is a need for a team effort between international centers and national research organizations to increase awareness of the importance of women in agriculture by policy-makers and scientists, and a more systematic use should be made of opportunities for increased cooperation between international and national centers in the utilization of national information systems, both to make technologies and their use known, and to obtain feedback on problems.
2. Strong national organizations are a basic requirement for their own contribution to national development and for effective interaction with the international centers on problem identification and on utilization of the research product of the centers. This calls for enhancing the two-way flow of information between national and international researchers.
3. The best way to integrate these multifaceted concerns into the work of the international centers and national systems is for each center to develop a long-term strategy involving consideration of women, where possible, in all phases of its research and development works, including feedback from female farmers. For maximum acceptability and efficiency, the nature, scope, and pace of such strategy development should be tailored to meet each organization's substantive concerns and management style.
4. Specifically, the CGIAR system has a multiple role, but its various components are autonomous entities, with different mandates and approaches. What matters is to take full advantage of the comparative advantage and the complementarity among centers; especially the complementarity between the commodity centers, IFPRI, and ISNAR.
5. Assessing the impact of the centers' work at the national systems level should include attention to gender issues.

C. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CGIAR SYSTEM

1. In order for a general concern for the status and role of women in agriculture to take a further and more permanent root within the CGIAR system, this must be linked to the technology generation and use process, starting with the identification of the problems to be researched. Attention should be directed to the interface between gender and the technology generation process, including variety/commodity choice, technology design, crop and livestock management and adaptation, and policy research aimed at breaking current constraints to technology usage.
2. While the primary function of the commodity centers is to develop germplasm and generate technology, this should be complemented by the generation of information and methodologies to enhance the use of technologies by women and other categories of producers. Collaboration with national organizations should play a major role in this generation of information and use of methodologies.
3. In general, it is the scientists who should be given opportunities to identify specific areas in which gender considerations make a difference to the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization's work, and actual plans of action should be drawn by experts on each issue. An interdisciplinary approach is important, and the social science perspective has a contribution to make to resource allocation within a center and to the identification of research priorities taking women's issues into consideration.
4. Natural and social scientists from different centers who are working on similar topics should be encouraged to exchange information and to meet regularly to present preliminary analyses and to discuss methodological approaches. Meetings of specialists to discuss specific issues in incorporating gender consideration into research plans and procedures need to be organized.
5. High-quality studies and important learning experiences in incorporating gender issues into the work of the international centers and national systems should be widely disseminated within the research and development communities, including donors. Some centers have taken a lead in the incorporation of natural and social sciences in activities focusing on beneficiaries of technology, particularly women. These centers should be encouraged to make this experience better known to other international and national centers and to share their methodological approaches.
6. In the technology transfer process, training is an area of special significance because of the need for gender considerations in extension. Both international and national centers should offer more training opportunity for women. Attention should also be paid to ways of increasing the number of female extension workers to reach farm women, thus making it possible for women to benefit from new

technology. Specific consideration of gender factors could take place as part of on-farm research or research with a farming systems perspective.

In summary, the papers prepared by the centers and the seminar discussions show that much work is already being done and that a slight shift in emphasis may make this work more effective without requiring significant extra funds. When necessary, special-project funding is likely to be available from donors.

Agenda

MONDAY, MARCH 25

19:00 Reception - dinner
followed by introduction to Bellagio.
Welcoming address: Dr. W. K. Gamble, ISNAR
Opening remarks: President R.W. Lyman, The Rockefeller
Foundation

TUESDAY, MARCH 26

09:00 Session 1, chaired by Dr. John McKelvey, representing the
IARCs Boards of Trustees.

Keynote Paper: The User's Perspective: Relevance for IARC
Priorities and Approaches. Dr. Lowell Hardin, Purdue
University.
Discussion.

International Centers and National Systems for Agricultural
Research: an Institution-building Approach: paper by Dr.
Eliseu de Andrade Alves, President, EMBRAPA.
Discussion.

12:30 LUNCH

14:00 Session 2, chaired by Dr. Joyce Moock, The Rockefeller
Foundation

Panel on the particular characteristics of women categories
of users, with comments in a regional perspective by Drs.
Laurian Unnevehr (Asia), Shubh Kumar (Africa), and
Jacqueline Ashby (Latin America).
Discussion

19:00 DINNER

Meeting of discussion group leaders

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27

09:00

Session 3, chaired by Dr. Alva App, The Rockefeller Foundation

User-oriented Research: a Synthesis of the IARCs' Experience, paper by Dr. Josette Murphy, ISNAR, followed by comments from the center directors.

11:15

Discussion 1 (3 working groups): common causes of successes and failures of past experiences related to:

Group 1. user-oriented research and the relations between the IARCs and national research. Mr. A. von der Osten, leader.

Group 2. Women categories of users and their relevance for the IARCs. Ms. E. Boserup, leader.

Group 3. The role of the social sciences in user identification and in technology development. Dr. C. Farrar, leader.

12:30

LUNCH

14:00

Session 4, chaired by Dr. Wilbur Selleck, AVRDC

Proposed Recommendations for Discussion, paper by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, IRRI.

Followed by discussion: identification of acceptable recommendation domains, and discussion of desirable changes in center programs, linkages to national research leaders and LDC policy-makers, and specific follow-up activities.

19:00

DINNER

THURSDAY, MARCH 28

09:00

Discussion 2 (3 working groups):

Each group to draft recommendations for the centers' programs on the topic assigned for the previous day's discussion, and suggest specific follow-up activities. Group composition and topic assignment remain as for discussion 1.

Discussion group leaders: Dr. J. Monyo(1), Dr. M.S. Swaminathan(2), and Dr. L. Hardin(3).

12:30

LUNCH

14:00

Session 6, chaired by Dr. William K. Gamble, ISNAR.

Discussion and drafting of recommendations and specific follow-up activities. The session ends with approval of a statement to be widely distributed to the centers, national research leaders, and donors.

Closing remarks.

19:00

DINNER

FRIDAY MARCH 29

Morning

Participants departure.

