

Chair's Summary¹
19th System Council meeting
Rabat, Morocco, 20-21 October 2023

Dear System Council Members, Active Observers, and invited guests,

During the past year, we have seen a noteworthy and welcome shift in the dialogue around CGIAR. Despite many challenges, funders have made significant efforts to increase and stabilize their funding, and CGIAR staff and scientists from across the system have worked hand in hand to advance the notion of an integrated, fit-for-purpose, impactful CGIAR. But it is hard to ignore that the world is on fire. The state of hunger is deteriorating; we have lost ground, and we must accelerate and increase our efforts if we are to have any chance of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

I joined the System Council meeting on its second day, after travelling from the fourth meeting of the UN Transitional Committee on Loss and Damage in Aswan, Egypt. I am grateful to my Co-Chairs, Dr. Metin Türker of Türkiye (both days) and Dr. Stefan Kachelriess-Matthess of Germany (day one only) for ably steering the work of the System Council in my absence. In acknowledging the recent, major earthquakes in both his home country and our host country of Morocco, Dr. Türker reminded us also of the importance of resilience and adaptability. System Council participants were able to witness this firsthand on their field trip to Marchouch, organized by our wonderful hosts, Dr. Aly Abousabaa and his team at the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and Dr. Faouzi Bekkaoui and his team at Morocco's National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA).

We are facing a productivity crisis that will be accelerated by climate change. We need to go beyond the incremental creation of projects and programs and invest in high-risk, high-reward research when possible. The System Board Chair, Dr. Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, called on Council members to support and challenge CGIAR and hold it to account as an integrated partnership. In that vein, Council members welcomed the in-person opportunity to co-create and advance the development of CGIAR's 2025-2027 research portfolio. The proposed ideas for the consolidation of existing CGIAR Research Initiatives were welcomed, and Council members highlighted the importance of analyzing and prioritizing key performance indicators – in collaboration with regional and country partners – to focus on areas where CGIAR has a true comparative advantage and can have most impact.

One of these areas is climate. We are living in a climate unseen since the birth of agriculture. The goals of food security and achieving the 1.5-degree limit are intrinsically linked – it will not be possible to have the former without achieving the latter. CGIAR needs to provide a

¹ The Chair's Summary is prepared as an early record of key messages and decisions taken, in advance of the more detailed formal meeting summary that will be shared for System Council input and approval.

compelling climate agenda as a core part of the new research portfolio, and leverage this to access the climate funding that non-traditional CGIAR funders are making available.

Council members discussed several important components of the new CGIAR research portfolio and integrated system in more detail. The positive spirit and tone of these conversations was recognized and appreciated. There was strong support for the Capacity Sharing for Development (CapSha) function and, more generally, capacity strengthening at both individual and institutional levels. Galvanized by the recent conference on "From research to impact: Towards just and resilient agri-food systems", opened by the President of India, HE Shrimati Droupadi Murmu, Council members called for gender to be fully included and elevated across the system, including in all aspects of the portfolio design. The need to consider other aspects of diversity and inclusion, such as disability, was also highlighted.

The existing use of and emerging opportunities for harnessing Artificial Intelligence (AI) were discussed. The System Council will return to this topic on a regular basis as CGIAR works to develop a unified, coherent, strategic approach to capture the opportunities and manage the risks of AI. Risk was also highlighted as part of the Ethics and Business Conduct item, and a small working group will be formed to take forward concerns raised around the system-wide adoption of CGIAR policies related to these topics, as mandated by the Charter.

Fluctuating funding remains a major source of risk for CGIAR. We urgently need an efficient, streamlined, flexible financing model that provides stability and predictability. The System Council welcomed the efforts to date of the funding modalities reference group and encouraged them to continue their work to develop a better framework.

There was strong support for the proposal to de-link CGIAR genebanks from the Science Group funding to ensure more stable funding for a crown jewel of CGIAR and a vital global public good. There is also a need to provide stable funding for other core CGIAR assets such as models, datasets, and analytical capabilities. Having the right financial architecture would generate enormous new opportunities, for example in climate finance. However, this can only be achieved if bilateral and pooled funding better align to jointly contribute to the CGIAR 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy. Fundraising targets should be ambitious and should utilize opportunities at upcoming global fora to attract new funders.

These discussions on portfolio design and funding facilitated new perspectives on how CGIAR can become more efficient, impactful, accountable, and fit for purpose. The world has changed and CGIAR must change with it. Earlier in the week, many Council members participated in a Unified Governance Workshop designed to align possible solutions among CGIAR stakeholders on a clear direction for a governance model to fulfil the CGIAR mission. While there is still much work to be done on an ambitious timeline, the workshop was invaluable in building trust and advancing towards constructive, pragmatic solutions for the future governance of CGIAR.

Pragmatism was also a key word used when discussing the future composition of the System Council itself. The current conversations on seat reconciliation have highlighted the need to

be inclusive and incentivize membership. Rules are very important, but we also need to ensure that there are clear and open pathways for new funders to join the System Council if their investments in the System meet the criteria. Funder representatives agreed to update their membership from 1 January 2024 under current eligibility rules, according to funder contributions over the 2019-21 period. The new System Council membership in 2024 will revisit eligibility criteria and the number of funder voting seats on the Council.

After three years of reform, we have made significant achievements. Now is the time to push to the finish line and consolidate the power of CGIAR as an integrated partnership. As we complete these reforms, we must also continue to look to the horizon and constantly work to stay at the forefront of the global agricultural research agenda. Partnerships with other organizations are a key part of this, and we were delighted that the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR) signed a hosting agreement with CGIAR earlier in the week.

The decisions and actions that we agreed are set out in full below, and a full meeting summary will be provided on a timely basis, in line with our Rules of Procedure.

In December, CGIAR will welcome Dr. Ismahane Elouafi as its new Executive Managing Director. As we look forward to the 20th System Council meeting, which will kindly be hosted by Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) in Brasília, I urge the entire CGIAR team, its funders, and partners to build on their recent achievements and push even harder to stay ahead of the next crisis.

Yours sincerely,

Juergen Voegele, Ph.D.
Chair, System Council

Appendix 1 – Decisions taken and Agreed positions and actions

DECISIONS

SC19-DP1 – Appointment of meeting Co-Chairs

The System Council appointed Dr. Metin Türker of Türkiye, System Council member representing Turkey as the non-voting Co-Chair for the 19th System Council meeting, pursuant to Article 5.2 of the CGIAR System Framework. Dr. Stefan Kachelriess-Matthess, System Council delegate representing Germany, was appointed as an additional Co-Chair for day one only.

SC19-DP2 – Adoption of the agenda

The System Council adopted the Agenda, as re-issued on 18th October 2023 with revised timings and an additional item 13a titled 'Reflections on Research Direction & Funding'.

SC19-DP3 – Assurance Oversight Committee succession plan

The System Council approved the Assurance Oversight Committee succession plan, as presented in document SC19-18b.

SC19-DP4 – IAES and supported independent bodies' 2024 workplan and budget

The System Council requested that its Assurance Oversight Committee complete their review of the budget within a month, after which it will be electronically submitted for System Council approval.

SC19-DP5 – Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service terms of reference

The System Council approved the revisions to the Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service Terms of Reference, as presented in document SC19-20c.

ACTIONS

SC19-AP1 – Development of the 2025-2027 research portfolio

System Council members were invited to submit written comments on the proposals for developing the 2025-2027 CGIAR research portfolio.

SC19-AP2 – Refinement of Key Performance Indicators

CGIAR management is encouraged to prioritize and focus the proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and work with national and regional partners to ensure they are embedded in development outcomes and link to the five CGIAR Impact Areas and global agenda setting.

SC19-AP3 – Funding of CGIAR assets

The System Council requested that a small working group be formed to analyze how CGIAR soft and hard assets are funded, structured, and managed, so that they can be protected and funded in the future.

SC19-AP4 – System-wide compliance with CGIAR ethics policies

The System Council requested that the Global General Counsel work with the Assurance Oversight Committee and Board Chairs' Network (BCN) to develop a statement on system-wide compliance with CGIAR policies, to be produced shortly after the 31 October meeting of the BCN.

SC19-AP5 – System Council committee endorsements of Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service workplan and budget

The System Council requested that the Assurance Oversight Committee and Strategic Impact, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee hold timely, joint discussions in 2024 to enable the System Council to make informed decisions on the Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service workplan and budget.

Appendix 2 - Participants

Meeting Leadership	Key:		
Chair: Juergen Voegele (Day 2) Co-Chairs: Stefan Kachelriess-Matthess (Germany – Day 1 only); Metin Türker (West Asia and North Africa)		<p>(*) indicates that voting member/active observer is being represented at the meeting by the alternate</p> <p>(**) indicated that voting member/active observer is being represented at the meeting by another delegated representative</p> <p>(v) shows virtual participation of a participant</p>	
System Council Voting Members (listed alphabetically)	Member representative	Member Alternates & Other Delegation Members	
African Development Bank	Martin Fregene (V) (Day 1)	Alternate: Innocent Musabyimana (V)	
Australia	Wendy Umberger (V)	Alternate: Julianne Biddle (V)	
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Ruben Echeverria	Alternate: Renee Lafitte Other delegates: Mariana Kim, Rinn Self	
Canada	Flora Mak*	Other delegate: François Cloutier (V)	
Denmark	Hanne Carus		
East Asia & Pacific	Yanzhou Qi** (China)	Other delegate: Rui Gu (China)	
European Commission	Christophe Larose		
Germany & Belgium	Felicitas Röhrlig (Germany)	Other delegates: Sarah Schmidt, Stefan Kachelriess-Matthess (Day 2)	
Ireland	Patrick McManus	Other delegate: Isabella Rae (V)	
Japan	Kosuke Minakuchi*	Other delegate: Satoru Muranaka	
Latin America and Caribbean	Jorge Mario Diaz Luengas (Colombia)	Other delegates: Lourdes Sofia Janampa Herrera (Peru) (V); Pedro Machado (Brazil) (V); Renee Janette Pacheco Santos (Peru) (V) (Day 1)	
Mexico	Adriana Herrera-Moreno	Alternate: Rodrigo Ubaldo Riojas Martinez	
The Netherlands	Timmo Gaasbeek		
Norway/EIARD Rep	Daniel van Gilst*		
Sub-Saharan Africa	Garba Sharubutu (Nigeria)		
Sweden	AnnaKarin Norling (V)	Alternate: Madeleine Jönsson (V)	
Switzerland	Manfred Kaufmann		
United Kingdom	Alan Tollervey	Other delegate: James Thomson	
United States of America	Rob Bertram	Alternate: Jerry Glover Other delegate: Gary Jahn	
West Asia & North Africa	Metin Türker (Türkiye)	Alternate: Tooraj Valinassab (Iran) (V) (Day 2); Other delegate: Didem Kokden (Türkiye)	
The World Bank	Martien Van Nieuwkoop		

Non-voting Ex-officio members		Member	Alternate & Other Delegates
CGIAR System Board		Lindiwe Majele Sibanda (Chair)	Other delegate: Patrick Caron (Vice-Chair)
Executive Director of the System Organization		Khuloud Odeh (a.i)	
Center/Alliance Representative 1: Convener of the Chairs of Center Boards of Trustees		Elsa Murano (V)	
Center/Alliance Representative 2: Convener of the Center Directors General		Mark Smith	
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)		Selvaraju Ramasamy*	
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)		Shantanu Mathur** (V)	
Active Observers		Representative	Alternate & Other Delegates
Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR)		Ravi Khetarpal	Alternate: Hildegard Lingnau
CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)		Holger Meinke (Chair)	Other delegate: Nompumelelo (Mpumi) Obokoh (Vice-Chair)

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

Invited Guests	Representative
Trustee of the CGIAR Trust Fund (World Bank)	Jane Mwebi (Trustee)
CGIAR System Council's Assurance Oversight Committee	Muriel Uzan (Chair)
France	Jean Albergel; Bernard Hubert (V)
CGIAR Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA)	Travis Lybbert (V) (Chair)

Additional Invited Guests To This Meeting	Representative
Global Crop Diversity Trust	Stefan Schmitz
System Board Chair Advisor	Myra Wopereis
CGIAR Trust Fund office	Vijayalakshmi Srinivasan
CGIAR Independent Science for Development Council (ISDC)	Suneetha Kadiyala

Session specific invitees	
Agenda item 8	Charlotte Lusty, Senior Director, Genebanks
Agenda item 10	Olwen Cussen, Secretary, Ad Hoc Committee on Governance (V) Neal Gutterson, Co Chair, Ad Hoc Committee on Governance (V)
Agenda items 5-6, 20, 21	Fetien Abera, ISDC Member Andrew Ash, ISDC Member Amy Beaudreault, Lead, ISDC Secretariat Pierre Boulanger, Advisor, ISDC Secretariat Magali Garcia, ISDC Member David Just, ISDC Member Svetlana Negroustoueva, Evaluation Function Lead, Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES) Lesley Torrance, ISDC Member
Agenda items 12-13	Nicoline de Haan, Director, GENDER Impact Platform Lavanya Shrinagesh, Director, Gender, Diversity, Inclusion, and Culture (V)

Session specific invitees	
Agenda item 14	Steve Korir, Chief Investigations Officer, Office of Ethics and Business Conduct (V) Alexandra Moyas, Director (a.i.), Office of Ethics and Business Conduct (V)
Agenda items 15-16	Aly Abousabaa, Regional Director, Central and West Asia and North Africa and Director General, ICARDA Namukolo Covic, Regional Director, East and Southern Africa (V) Temina Lalani-Shariff, Regional Director, South Asia (V) Baboucarr Manneh, Regional Director, West and Central Africa (V) Javier Mateo Vega, Senior Director, Partnerships, Stewardship, Innovation, and Intelligence (V) Juan Lucas Restrepo, Global Director, Partnerships and Advocacy (V)
Agenda item 17	David Abreu, Senior Director, Digital and Data for Impact and Integrated Management (V) Brian King, Head of Digital and Data Innovation Accelerator (V) Jawoo Koo, Senior Research Fellow, Natural Resources and Resilience (V)

Technical resources	Name/Role/Organization
SC Chair adviser	Jonathan Wadsworth, Lead Agriculture Specialist, Agriculture and Food Global Practice, World Bank
CGIAR staff	Marion Barriskell, Global Director, Business Operations and Finance
	Fiona Bourdin-Farrell, Global Director, People and Culture
	Madina Bazarova, Acting Co-Chief Audit Executive (V)
	Andrew Campbell, Executive Managing Director (a.i.)
	Appolinaire Djikeng, Managing Director, Resilient Agri-Food Systems (a.i.) (V) (Day 1)
	Ismahane Elouafi, Incoming Executive Managing Director (Day 2)
	Jamila Ntege, Acting Co-Chief Audit Executive (V)
	Lotte Pang, Managing Director, Communications and Outreach
	Michiel Roovers, Senior Director, Governance and Institutional Risk
	Harold Roy-Macauley, Managing Director, Regions and Partnerships (V)
	Johan Swinnen, Managing Director, Systems Transformation
	Julie Van der Bliek, Director, Multilateral & Bilateral Innovative Finance and Resource Mobilization
	Sonja Vermeulen, Managing Director, Genetic Innovation
	Rutger de Witt Wijnen, Managing Director, Institutional Strategy and Systems (a.i.) and General Counsel
	Andre Zandstra, Global Director, Innovative Finance and Resource Mobilization
CGIAR System Council Secretariat	Emma Quilligan, Senior Manager, System Council Support
CGIAR Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service (IAES)	Allison Grove Smith, Director, IAES
European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD) Secretary	Nienke Bientema

Event support

Aubrey Hasse, Governance Officer (V)

Victoria Pezzi, Meeting and Events Coordinator

Vashna Singh, Meetings and Events, Consultant