



Paris, 2 March 2012

Statement from **CGIAR Consortium Board Chair, Carlos Pérez del Castillo**

Today is an especially important day for CGIAR, and I am honored to be able to share it with you, Your Excellency, Mrs. Dorte Riggelsen, Mr. Godtfredsen, Mr. Seam, Mr. Meunier.

CGIAR recently celebrated 40 years of significant achievements covering a number of different areas of research. Indeed, CGIAR research has played a major role in agricultural development in general and world food security in particular, helping to improve the livelihoods of billions of rural poor. Establishing the CGIAR Consortium as an International Organization through today's signing ceremony was crucial to the existence of the organization and, therefore, the continuation of its research.

Over the past 40 years, CGIAR has received global recognition for being an international partnership that plays a key role in agricultural research, generating knowledge to the benefit of smallholder farmers as well as tangible returns on its investments. It has often been cited that one dollar invested in CGIAR research results in about 9 dollars in increased productivity in developing countries.

All of this was made possible by the support and trust of our donors. Denmark ranks as one of CGIAR's longest-standing donors. CGIAR has enjoyed a close partnership with Denmark since 1972, and over the course of this 40-year relationship, Denmark has contributed more than 204 million US dollars to CGIAR research, making it an important and strategic contributor. This partnership with Denmark was further strengthened with the launch, in October 2009, of the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), which opened its offices in Copenhagen.

I would also like to express my gratitude to France, which has also been instrumental in facilitating CGIAR's bid to acquire International Organization status. France has, for a long time, extended its support to CGIAR and more recently to the CGIAR Consortium.



The Consortium headquarters are hosted in Montpellier, a center of excellence in agricultural research. Moreover, the French scientific community is involved in the Global Rice Science Partnership (GRiSP), another CGIAR Research Program. France contributes significantly to this partnership through the work of some exceptional French researchers.

Without the active support of both Denmark and France, CGIAR would not have succeeded in its mission over the past four decades.

Although some CGIAR partnerships have endured, the world in which we live has changed drastically since the seventies. Today, agriculture faces multiple and complex new challenges. Besides the continuing problems associated with trying to devise innovative ways of improving agricultural production and productivity in order to feed a growing world population and reduce poverty levels, we are currently facing a global natural resources crisis, manifested by growing water scarcity, land degradation and the depletion of fish stocks. We are also being confronted by volatile prices and an energy crisis. In addition, climate change is putting an increasing burden on our already strained food production systems. There is also a pressing need to address the increasing demand for meat, milk and other animal products as incomes rise in the developing world. At the same time, we continue to encounter agricultural trade protectionist practices in major developed countries that limit access to markets and contribute to unfair competition, as well as inappropriate government policies, such as export bans, which were important drivers of the 2007-08 food price crises. All these challenges transpire at a time when governments are facing tight budgetary constraints in view of the critical debt and financial crises.

These circumstances brought about the realization that “business-as-usual” was no longer possible in CGIAR. As a result, CGIAR Centers and donors represented by the CGIAR Fund Council, our main funding platform, agreed to work together to bring about reform in the CGIAR System. The resulting reform process embodies institutional and governance changes, new approaches to scientific work and much greater attention to partnerships in order to ensure increased sustainability for agricultural research, and a greater impact on the world's poorest.



The various parties also agreed to be guided by the principles set out in the CGIAR Strategic Results Framework and to execute their joint research activities through the CGIAR Research Programs. The Strategic Results Framework defines the four strategic system level outcomes that CGIAR Research Programs should pursue: reduced rural poverty, increased food security, improved nutrition and health, and more sustainably managed natural resources.

Moreover, CGIAR donors, including Denmark and France, agreed that the CGIAR Consortium needed to have its own international legal status to enable it to more effectively carry out its mandate. This change in legal status will help improve System-wide efficiency, increase the effective visibility of the Centers and their programs, and strengthen links to and ties with national and regional agricultural priorities and interests.

Achieving International Organization status and recognition is indispensable if CGIAR is to be able to speak with one voice at an international level, thereby raising awareness and strengthening its credibility at a time when agricultural research is key to the survival of billions of people.

As a result of your commitment to the CGIAR vision and by signing the Agreement establishing the Consortium as an International Organization, you are contributing to the success of the CGIAR reform process, which will ensure that international agricultural research for development has a greater impact on the ground with regard to the four system level outcomes just mentioned.

Not only is the establishment of the Consortium as an International Organization a major step toward a new era for the CGIAR System, it is also a major step towards SCIENCE FOR A FOOD SECURE FUTURE.

Your Excellency, Mr. Godtfredsen, Mr. Seam, Mr. Meunier, on behalf of the Consortium Board, the Consortium Office and the Consortium Research Centers, I would like to express my appreciation for signing this Agreement today and reaffirming your support of CGIAR's mission.

I believe this day will forever be remembered in the history of CGIAR and we thank you for making it possible.