

Agri-Trade FORUM

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Seeking a Greater Coherence of Agricultural Research Efforts

by Michel Petit, IPC Member

A considerable number of IPC members participated in the first Global Conference of Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) held in Montpellier, France, March 28-31, 2010. It was attended by more than 800 participants, coming from more than 100 countries and representing a diverse set of stakeholders (international researchers working in international and national research institutions as well as universities, research administrators, policy makers, farmers' organizations, civil society organizations, etc.). What is the significance of this big event?



Michel Petit

The GCARD had already received international recognition in advance of the March event: the July 2009 L'Aquila G8 Declaration called for the promotion of agricultural research and development as one component of G8 global food security efforts. The Declaration highlighted the role of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and emphasized the importance of partnerships. The G8 promoted the revitalization of

the Global Forum for Agricultural Research for Development (GFAR) so as to ensure effective and inclusive stakeholder participation (e.g. farmers organizations, civil society, private sector) in determining research priorities, and to strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of all agricultural research efforts, including those of the CGIAR and national and regional research systems. This first GCARD was subsequently organized by GFAR, in close collaboration with the CGIAR.

The critical role which agricultural research must play to fight hunger and poverty is now widely recognized, despite the fact that there are a range of views on certain research and development issues, from GMOs, to pesticides, to the role of smallholders. Likewise, there is a wide

The very fact that the first GCARD was held and that it gathered a wide diversity of agricultural research stakeholders and of itself a big success.

recognition of the need to go beyond "business as usual" in agricultural research matters. This particularly applies to the international centers of the CGIAR, whose efforts should be better integrated in a global strategy involving many partners, particularly National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) of the developing countries and regional fora of NARS, such as the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA). In addition, I personally
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IPC Spring Seminar

Agricultural Price Volatility: Prospects, Challenges, and Possible Solutions

Barcelona, Spain, May 26 - 27

The agricultural sector has been deeply battered by both the food and financial crises and faces a looming climate change crisis. Projections differ on whether commodity prices will continue their long-term decline of the last decades or experience a reversal of this trend, but experts agree that price volatility is likely to grow in the future. **Price volatility presents different sets of challenges to consumers and producers throughout the world and a grave risk to the food security of millions of people in developing countries.**

In response to these challenges, IPC, in collaboration with ICTSD and the University of Barcelona, will hold a seminar to examine current and projected trends in prices, review past policy responses, examine policy options available today and arrive at pragmatic recommendations on addressing volatility in the future.

Find more information at http://www.agritrade.org/events/2010Spring_Seminar_Ag-PriceVolatility.html



Discussion on Regional Integration and Food Security In Africa

In the 2009 G8 “L’Aquila” Joint Statement on Global Food Security, leaders affirmed their support for country-led food security strategies implemented at the country and regional level. Given the small size, landlocked geography, and lack of infrastructure in many African countries, regional integration is a key component in the effort to achieve food security on the continent. On March 2, 2010, IPC partnered with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States to host a discussion on this topic.



Katrin Kuhlman and Lynette Chen listen to Anne Mbaabu during the discussion on Regional Integration and Food Security in Africa
(c) David Hawxhurst/Wilson Center 2010

Tutwiler of the U.S. Department of Agriculture spoke about the role of regional integration in the implementation of the U.S. government’s food security initiative, Feed the Future. She highlighted areas where the U.S. could be involved on a regional level, including standards, tariffs and infrastructure. Paul Jourdan of the South African Regional Spatial Development Program, Vivien Foster of the World Bank, Bill Lane of Caterpillar, and Aly Abou-Sabaa of the Africa Development Bank discussed challenges to building infrastructure in Africa, particularly in order to connect farmers to markets and highlighted solutions to improve infrastructure going forward.

In addition to the physical capacity requirements for regional integration, sound policies are also a necessity. Lynette Chen of NEPAD Business Foundation, Anne Mbaabu of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa and **IPC Chief Executive Charlotte Hebebrand** talked specifically about the trade policies—both improvements in trade facilitation and liberalization and progress still to be made in reducing trade barriers. Julie Howard of the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa and John Sewell of the Wilson Center closed the event, urging the implementation of capacity-building strategies and policy reforms while momentum for eradicating food insecurity remains high.

Copies of the presentations can be found on the IPC website at <http://www.agritrade.org/events/AfricaEvent.html>.

IPC member emeritus Ann

IPC Releases Papers Under ICTSD-IPC Platform on Climate Change

The latest paper released under the ICTSD-IPC Platform on Climate Change, Agriculture and Trade, *The Role of International Trade in Climate Change Adaptation* projects that food and agricultural trade flows are expected to increase substantially in a context of changing agricultural productivity around the world resulting from climate change. Trade has the potential to help counteract this effect by delivering agricultural goods to areas experiencing productivity declines. The role of trade as an adaptation tool becomes even more important in light of recent scientific studies putting the effects of carbon fertiliza-

tion in question. The authors warn, however, that it would be unwise to rely solely on trade to help us adjust to climate change, and the international community must also importantly commit to increased and sustained investment in agricultural productivity.

Outlining the challenges that climate change presents in particular to developing countries, the Platform paper *Climate Change and Developing Country Agriculture: An Overview of Expected Impacts, Adaptation and Mitigation Challenges, and Funding Requirement,*

examines how agricultural producers might adapt by diversifying into new products, methods of production and new tradable services. The paper also examines the scope for climate change finance and proposes a linkage with Aid for Trade finance, while it stresses the need for supplemental funding for climate change adaptation needs.

These papers are both available on the IPC website at http://www.agritrade.org/events/Platform_001.html.

Food and agricultural trade flows are expected to increase substantially ...around the world resulting from climate change

ICTSD-IPC Platform Holds Roundtable at Margins of OECD Agricultural Ministerial

The ICTSD-IPC Platform held a roundtable on Climate Change and Food Security, February 24 in Paris at the margin of the OECD Agricultural Ministerial, in order to take stock of the Copenhagen Summit and of next steps for the climate change and agriculture agenda. UNFCCC negotiators explained that agriculture was discussed under both pillars of the climate change negotiations. The Ad Hoc Working Group on the Kyoto Protocol (AWG KP) includes a focus on land use, land use change and forestry. The status quo for agriculture soils (grazing land management and cropland management) with the question of voluntary vs. mandatory accounting is still to be decided (for Annex I Parties only). A more comprehensive accounting in the future (including land-based accounting) may be considered, and the scope of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which at present is limited to afforestation and reforestation activities, might possibly be expanded to include soil carbon activities. Agriculture is

featured in the other pillar – the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Collaborative Action (AWG LCA), whose preamble notes the important role of food production systems in mitigation and adaptation efforts. On mitigation, the text calls upon parties to promote and cooperate in research and development, including transfer of technologies, practices and processes that control, reduce or prevent GHG emissions, especially those that improve the efficiency and productivity of agricultural systems in a sustainable manner and those that could support adaptation, thereby contributing to safeguarding food security and livelihoods. Moreover, the text calls upon the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to undertake a work program on agriculture. Whereas the Copenhagen Accord did not include any specific

references to agriculture, Parties agreed to resume negotiations under both pillars – the AWG KP and AWG LCA.

Simon Upton, Chairperson of the OECD Roundtable on Sustainable Development, provided an overview of the new Global Research Alliance on Agricultural GHGs, whose formation had been agreed to in Copenhagen by 21 countries, although it is distinct from the UNFCCC process. Participants of this alliance will share their knowledge and research efforts; identify gaps in the research portfolio; and leverage new resources for collaborative projects. The organizational sectors of focus for the research should be arable systems, rice, intensive and extensive livestock, and collaboration with both the private sector and the CGIAR is foreseen.



Participants of the panel discussion on the outcomes of Copenhagen (c) ICTSD

IPC Comments on the Brazil-US Cotton Dispute

In April 2010, the United States and Brazil reached an agreement on the longstanding WTO cotton dispute.



This is good news, as the global economy will not be burdened

with further trade restrictions in the form of Brazilian countermeasures. The settlement also shows that the WTO dispute settlement system is still functioning, despite the current impasse in the Doha Round negotiations.

As **IPC Chairperson Carlo Trojan** states, “A negotiated compensation settlement is always preferable to trade restrictions...[but] the ideal resolution to a WTO dispute is compliance by the guilty party with the panel’s findings.”

Should the settlement translate into substantial changes to the US farm bill, the settlement could be good news for African cotton producers as well. **IPC Vice Chairperson Marcelo Regunaga** explains: “the cotton initiative, which the Africans were able

to incorporate in the Doha Round...remains stuck.”

“This situation exemplifies how difficult it is for LDCs to benefit from the dispute settlement process.” **IPC member and Executive Director for the IDEAS Center Nicolas Imboden** says.

The WTO dispute settlement system is still functioning, despite the current impasse in the Doha Round negotiations

The full statement from IPC, Policy Alert: The Cotton Dispute, as well as other IPC Alerts are available at http://www.agritrade.org/press-room/press_releases.html.

(“Seeking” from page 1) believe that more attention is required to more effectively promote public-private research partnerships.

Given this background and these challenges, the very fact that the first GCARD was held and that it gathered a wide diversity of agricultural research stakeholders and actors is in and of itself a big success. Yet, it remains to be seen what added value the revitalized GFAR and the organization of the first GCARD create. Both a wide consultation of stakeholders and a significant degree of meaningful consensus will be required in order to effectively formulate research problems and priorities – two objectives which are not always easily attainable in international discussions.

The outcome of the CGIAR reform process, which remains the central component of a renewed, and now legitimised, global agricultural research system also remains to be seen.

The international centers of the CGIAR, which have been so effective in the past, remain the main strategic component of the global ARD system, yet the CG system is undergoing a major reform, designed to make the centers more effective collectively and more responsive to the needs of the many stakeholders they must partner with. It is important to emphasize that the impetus for reform was concern about the long term sustainability of effective research efforts, which need to be maintained over several years, sometimes decades, but are funded on the basis of annual financial allocations, coming from OECD countries’ development assistance budgets, the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and foundations, with the most recent new funder the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Over the years, managing that dilemma has become increasingly difficult, with the result that the share of ‘core funding’, i.e. funding without programmatic strings, has declined steadily. Although total funding

increased significantly; research teams and even individual researchers have had to scramble to fund their activities. In these circumstances, it has not proved easy to maintain a strategic focus. Not yet agreed, the reform seeks to address this problem via the creation of a common fund, which would finance a number of strategic, cross-center ‘Mega Programs’, and the creation of a Consortium Board, representing all the centers, negotiating with the common fund, and ensuring the overall cohesion of the system. There are two IPC members serving on the Consortium Board.

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The importance of agricultural research for the promotion of global food security has been re-recognized by the international community. Now we must ensure that this consensus can be translated into effective organisations and collaborations.

IPC MISSION

The International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC) promotes a more open and equitable global food system by pursuing pragmatic trade and development policies in food and agriculture to meet the world’s growing needs. IPC convenes influential policymakers, agribusiness executives, farm leaders, and academics from developed and developing countries to clarify complex issues, build consensus, and advocate policies to decision-makers.

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