

An Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development

The Final Report of the Steering Committee for the Consultative Process on Agricultural Science and Technology

12 August 2003

Annex I

Steering Committee for Consultative Process

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Annex II

Relationship of Assessment to Other Activities

The Proposed assessment would complement other recent or ongoing activities. The two most relevant activities are the Inter-Academy Council Study on Science and Technology Strategies for Improved Agricultural Productivity and Food Security in Africa, and the Millennium Development Goal Task Force on Hunger. A memorandum of understanding from the co-chairs of the IAC, MDG and this proposed assessment was forwarded to Kofi Annan on November 4, 2002 outlining the scope of the three activities, demonstrating the complementarities among them and that the co-chairs are in constant contact with each other. This Annex briefly outlines the scope of the IAC and MDG activities and other related activities and highlights how the proposed assessment builds upon and complements them. One key difference between the proposed Intergovernmental Assessment and other activities is that the proposed structure is fully inclusive of all stakeholders, including all governments, and it would involve 100s of local and institutional experts.

1. The Inter-Academy Council Study on Science and Technology Strategies for Improved Agricultural Productivity and Food Security in Africa

In March 2002, Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations asked the InterAcademy Council (IAC) to develop a strategic plan on how best to harness technology and science to improve food security in Africa. A Study Panel of 19 members with expertise in science, economics and technology delineated the scope of the study and commissioned the drafting of resource documents. The Panel also convened four regional consultative workshops in Africa during January and February 2003. The purpose of the workshops was twofold: to garner better understanding of the regional constraints to improved agricultural productivity and to identify explicitly the role of science and technology in alleviating constraints and exploiting opportunities.

UN agencies, such as FAO, are fully participating in the development of the plan. While the report would primarily develop a technological strategy for shaping Africa's agricultural future, it will address also the conditional setting for activating the use of science and technology. Specific action proposals will emphasize the role of both the public and private sector. The objective of the study is to foster food production in Africa by outlining the necessary conditions to achieve food security. The IAC report is due in 2003 and is intended to be a tool for immediate action.

There are key synergies between the proposed Intergovernmental Assessment and the IAC study. The International Assessment will build on the IAC study, which is similar in scope, but limited to Africa. The key differences are time frame and geography. The International Assessment will evaluate the viability of strategies over the longer time frame (20-50 years) and for all regions of the world.

The IAC study is looking at health issues (such as malaria, HIV/AIDs), which affect agricultural productivity. The proposed Intergovernmental Assessment will address the effects of technologies on human and animal health as well as productivity. Similarly, both studies will assess natural resource constraints but the proposed Intergovernmental Assessment will include concerns about ecosystems and biodiversity.

2. Millennium Development Goal Task Force on Hunger

The UN General Assembly agreed to a set of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2000. Early in 2002, Secretary General Annan asked Professor Jeffery Sachs to direct the UN MDG Program, a program designed to develop action plans to meet targets such as halving extreme poverty, achieving universal primary education, halting the spread of Aids and other diseases and reversing the loss of environmental resources.

The Hunger Task Force addresses the MDG target of reducing by half between 1990 and 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. About 20 leaders from science, policy, the civil society, the private sector, UN agencies and developing country governments will produce and implement recommendations

aimed at reducing hunger. The global strategy is based on the following key elements:

1. Drastically increase food security of farmers in higher-risk environments and remote regions: a “Doubly Green Revolution” (increasing production while enhancing the environment) for Africa and mountainous or dry areas of Asia and Latin America.
2. Expand ownership and control of natural assets to poor households and communities.
3. Improve agricultural input and product markets and business linkages to benefit the poor.
4. Directly enhance nutrition of the most hungry and vulnerable through community life cycle nutrition programs.
5. Improve famine prevention and response by expanding the use of best practices.
6. Integrate hunger reduction strategies into national policies.

While Africa is the first priority, food-exporting countries such as India and China are also included. The Task Force report is due at end of 2004.

There are two major differences between the work of the Task Force and the proposed Intergovernmental Assessment: time frame and “assessment.” The Task Force aims to have an impact prior to 2015, whereas the proposed Intergovernmental Assessment will address the longer term, i.e., to 2050. The Task Force will not assess science and technologies in relation to hunger and rural poverty, but will strive to recommend programs that fulfill the six directives above over a three-year time frame. The Task Force will identify science and technology as one tool for combating hunger, whereas the proposed Intergovernmental Assessment will discuss ways to better mobilize science and technology to do so.

Other –related activities

This is **not** meant to be an exhaustive list, but examples of activities that will be used in the proposed Intergovernmental Assessment:

- FAO/SOFI – The State of Food Insecurity in the world are reports produced annually on global and national efforts to reach the goal set by the 1996 World Food Summit: to reduce by half the number of undernourished people in the world by the year 2015.
- GFAR – The Global Forum on Agricultural Research is a multi-stakeholder initiative that contributes to eradicating poverty, achieving food security, and conserving and managing natural resources. It enhances national capacities to generate, adapt and transfer knowledge.
- CGIAR – The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research is in the midst of a reform and research priority-setting exercise.
- IFPRI – The International Food Policy Research Institute has launched a initiative to develop scenarios of plausible futures for use in upcoming studies.

- IPCC – The work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change involves plausible scenarios, which contain information on projections and climate change that contain significant implications for agriculture.
- MA – The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is currently undergoing a study on the implications of historical and projected changes in ecosystem goods and services on agriculture.