

7 October 2022



Professor Michael Fakhri
Special Rapporteur on the right to food
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Ref: AL OTH 89/2022

Dear Prof. Fakhri,

I am writing with reference to your communication of 31 August 2022.

Let me state from the outset that CGIAR is deeply committed to ensuring that everyone on the planet has equitable and affordable access to the food they need for a healthy diet. To deliver that goal, we equip smallholder farmers with the research and innovations they need to thrive despite the many and growing threats to food security. Our organizational strategy – which encompasses the work of the genebanks managed by Centers within the CGIAR system – is central to delivering that goal. Likewise, the transition towards a more integrated operating structure ensures we can continue to meet the needs of the farmers we serve as they face increasingly complex, global and interconnected challenges, including climate change and the global food crisis.

We welcome your interest in these and other aspects of our work. However, your letter contains a number of factually incorrect statements relating to access to the genebanks that are managed by CGIAR Centers, and to CGIAR's reforms. In the context of the very real threats to food security the world is facing, it is our duty to address these errors and the conclusions drawn from them. We do this in support of the [code of conduct](#) of the United Nations Human Rights Council, which calls for the work of the special procedures to be guided by principles including impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity and constructive international dialogue and cooperation. We take this opportunity to respond to your letter with corrections and clarifications.

Contrary to statements in your letter, the [One CGIAR transition process](#) – including unified governance arrangements – will not negatively impact the conservation, distribution, availability and sustainable use of the international germplasm collections held in trust by CGIAR Centers. The [CGIAR Genebank Initiative](#) – and other newly created [CGIAR Initiatives](#) – enable us to not just continue but to expand efforts to safeguard agrobiodiversity and to provide users with access to germplasm upon request as a public service.

The collections held in trust¹ by CGIAR Centers operate under the policy guidance of the governing body of the International Plant Treaty (the Treaty), in line with [Article 15](#) agreements that each of the relevant Centers signed with the governing body.

¹ Refer to this explanatory note and draft of the 1994 CGIAR Center and FAO Agreements placing Plant Germplasm under the auspices of FAO.
<https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10947/149/cg9405c.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

All CGIAR Centers, which are and will remain legally independent following the One CGIAR reforms, are committed to fulfilling their obligations under the Treaty.

None of the changes outlined in the One CGIAR transition process provide additional influence to private corporations over CGIAR's work, nor do they reduce the important cooperation and partnership CGIAR Centers have with host countries through their statutes and governing Boards.

To date, CGIAR genebanks and breeding programs have distributed over six million germplasm samples through more than 60,000 transfer agreements under the Plant Treaty system. That equates to 400,000 samples a year or more than 1,000 samples a day. In 2021 alone, CGIAR genebanks distributed 64,475 samples. Of these, 51 percent went to universities and research institutes and 34 percent went to national agricultural research and extension systems in 91 countries. Together, CGIAR genebanks and breeding programs sent materials to over 110 countries in 2021 at a level that represents nearly 90 percent of total germplasm exchanges reported worldwide to the Treaty Secretariat.

Through the transition to a more unified and integrated One CGIAR, our Centers and genebanks will be able to expand their research and innovation efforts. These efforts strengthen the capacity of national programs, respond to the priorities and needs of smallholder farmers across the global South, and distribute germplasm to recipients around the world working to advance food security and agricultural development.

Contrary to your statements, both FAO and the Global Crop Diversity Trust (Crop Trust) have been extensively engaged during the One CGIAR transition. As set out [here](#), FAO has an "active observer" seat on the [CGIAR System Council](#), attends and contributes during all System Council meetings, and has been closely involved in and is [supportive of](#) the One CGIAR transition process.

Similarly, building on the [memorandum of understanding](#)² between the Crop Trust and CGIAR, we have worked closely with the Crop Trust throughout the transition process, including in the design and launch of the CGIAR Genebank Initiative. The Crop Trust continues to provide independent review of the genebanks' performance through their long-term agreements with individual Centers.

The One CGIAR transition itself was born of a recognition that the evolving, interconnected global challenges facing our food systems require a unified and integrated response from the world's largest publicly funded agricultural research network. Its purpose is to ensure that farmers across the global South have the research and technologies they need to respond to the many global and interconnected threats to food security, delivering impact where it is needed most at speed and scale.

Your communication misstates the role CGIAR's regional and country constituencies have played — and continue to play — in shaping One CGIAR. Some of the most powerful statements supporting the move towards operating as One CGIAR have come repeatedly from

² An update to the MOU is a work in progress

the country constituencies who serve as voting members in CGIAR's System Council³. That is because a priority for the transition is to enable CGIAR's country partners to access the full range of CGIAR's global capabilities, without engaging with multiple entities. CGIAR recognizes the invaluable contribution of countries hosting CGIAR Centers, and Center Boards maintain host country representatives as voting members. Thus, the combined representation of countries from the global South at the Center Boards and at the System Council assures their participation in strategic decision making at CGIAR.

The errors mentioned above, lead you to conclude that the One CGIAR transition will have a negative impact on Africa and Asia. By contrast, leaders playing a critical role in delivering food security in those regions welcome our reforms. Following our renewed focus on partnership and engagement, they are working with us to ensure that the reforms' success directly improves the lives of smallholder farmers, their families and communities in those regions. I take this opportunity to highlight a sample of publicly available statements made within recent months to illustrate this point.

Noting your reference to **African Development Bank President**, I can share that **Dr. Akinwumi Adesina** was a signatory to [a recently-signed agreement](#) between the Bank, the African Union Commission (AUC), the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and CGIAR aimed at aligning efforts to boost food and nutrition security on the continent. The agreement affirms support for CGIAR's ongoing reform process and ensures its alignment with the needs and best interests of African farmers and food systems.

Dr. Yemi Akinbamijo, Executive Director of FARA, a signatory organization to the agreement, [said that](#): "The transition to the One CGIAR is the most far-reaching reorganization the CGIAR has undertaken. By the same token, it offers all of us the best opportunity for the agricultural research and innovation system in Africa to institutionally retool, rewire, reengineer itself for large scale impact. And in this regard, African partners do welcome these reforms."

Dr. Kanayo F. Nwanze, former president of IFAD, Founder of FAYODE and African Food Prize 2016 Laureate, writes [here](#) about what it will take for Africa to win the war on hunger, saying: "Institutions and organizations working in the agriculture sector need to be well integrated into national systems and plans. The CGIAR has taken bold steps to reorganize its operational structure and partnerships in Africa towards this goal."

Professor Garba Hamidu Sharubutu, Executive Secretary of the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria, representative for the Sub-Saharan Africa Constituency on the CGIAR System Council, recently [stated that](#): "We are already seeing how the One CGIAR transition is positioning the organization to deliver a more effective, coordinated and systemic response to multiple shocks to our global food systems."

³ There are 18 countries from the global South represented in five regional constituencies on the CGIAR System Council as voting members. The five regional constituencies agree amongst themselves who is their voting member and alternate member, and how they will work together.

Addressing the CGIAR System Council in March 2021, **Ban Ki-Moon, 8th UN Secretary-General, Co-chair of the Ban Centre for Global Citizens** [said](#): “Now more than ever, we need your efforts to support demand-driven innovations such as those championed by CGIAR.”

Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, recently [highlighted support for CGIAR](#) as part of a proposed cooperation initiative to boost global food security. He identified the need to enable CGIAR to increase innovation and build cooperation on agricultural science and technology among countries, saying that the food and energy sectors are crucial for the healthy performance of the world economy and the effective implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Such support is echoed the world over precisely because, as **Alice Ruhweza, Africa Regional Director at the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and CGIAR System Board member**, [has said](#), “The One CGIAR transition is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fundamentally transform our organization to deliver the innovations needed to address some of humanity’s most urgent challenges.”

CGIAR has been and will continue to be unwavering in its commitment to transparency and inclusion. We maintain a public and transparent record of System Council and System Board meeting summaries and decision registers, as well as links to lists of stakeholders involved in consultations, staff webinars, and frequently-asked-questions related to the transition to One CGIAR – everything is posted on [CGIAR.org](#) and available to all.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you for a constructive and fact-based dialogue that supports our shared goal of a food- and nutrition-secure future for all. In the meantime, I respectfully share in the annexes to this letter, further details in response to your requests for clarification, as well as a point-by-point response to your statements.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claudia Sadoff', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Claudia Sadoff
CGIAR Executive Managing Director

Annex I: Responding to requests for clarification

1. *Please provide any additional information and/ or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned concerns.*

Please refer to our letter above and Annex II below for a point-by-point response.

2. *Please provide information on the outcome of any review, or any social or human rights impact assessment that has been conducted to protect Governments' authority for their legislation and agricultural agenda-setting as well as relevant stakeholders, farmers, and food consumers affected by the restructuring to ensure its compatibility with international human rights law, in particular with the right to food.*

As addressed in the point-by-point response below, the One CGIAR integration process is not a “restructuring” nor does it in any way impact governments’ authority for their legislation and agricultural agenda-setting. Each CGIAR Center operates in full alignment with its headquarters host country agreement and governing instrument in both letter and spirit, and headquarters host country governments continue to be valued members of CGIAR Center Boards.

With respect to stakeholder consultations and engagement – including with governments – please refer to our response to Statement #2 in Annex II below.

Each of CGIAR’s new research initiatives was designed in consultation with stakeholders – as set out in proposal documents (see annexes in this [document](#) and [here](#); and each initiative was independently reviewed in a process moderated by CGIAR’s [Independent Science for Development Council](#), including on the extent to which it is demand-driven through co-design with partners and stakeholders (reviews can be accessed [here](#) and [here](#)).

3. *Please provide additional information as to whether CGIAR held genuine consultations or intends to do so, with all affected Governments, Centers, and stakeholders in the process of the decision-making; please describe the form and nature of the consultation along with what substantive information was provided to stakeholders.*

Please refer to our letter above and our response to Statement #2 in Annex II below.

4. *Please clarify which mechanisms are foreseen by One CGIAR for enhancing local Centers’ power, participation, and inclusion and respecting their local knowledge within the context of the right to self-determination. Please also clarify how you intend to support states to ensure that people most affected by food insecurity can participate in decision-making aimed at ameliorating their material conditions.*

As clarified in response to point #2 above, and in accordance with our [2030 Research and Innovation Strategy](#), CGIAR remains fully committed to delivering science and innovations that advance the transformation of food, land and water systems in a climate crisis, working in partnership at the local, sub-national, national, regional and global levels; and responding to stakeholders’ needs and priorities.

Through the One CGIAR integration process, mechanisms for achieving this are being further strengthened through a common, CGIAR-wide country and regional engagement model that provides stakeholders and partners easier access to the full range of CGIAR's global capabilities.

The term "local Centers" is not clear in this request, but if it is meant to refer to CGIAR Centers, it should be noted that CGIAR Centers are international organizations with broad global footprints, working with partners at different levels. Centers' role in the One CGIAR integration process is discussed in depth in the point-by-point response below.

5. *Please provide information on how One CGIAR intends to establish relationships with national agricultural research systems (NARS). What changes are envisaged and how will those changes ensure inclusive and transparent involvement of all NARS?*

First, it should be clarified that "One CGIAR" is not an entity – it is a term used to refer to CGIAR's integration process, agreed in 2019 (see details in response to Statement #3 below).

CGIAR's relationships with national agricultural research and innovation systems (NARIS) are well established and span CGIAR's 50-year history. Through the One CGIAR integration process, CGIAR aims to further strengthen those relationships, in line with our new [Engagement Framework](#), strong partnerships across the [2022–24 portfolio of CGIAR Research Initiatives](#), and a dedicated CGIAR-wide Partnerships and Advocacy function that can facilitate more effective collaboration and engagement between NARIS and CGIAR's full range of global capabilities.

Specifically, looking forward, CGIAR seeks to deepen and broaden its engagement with NARIS, working more closely with government agencies and the rich ecosystems of academic institutions, research centers, private sector and civil society actors operating in the research-for-development space in partner countries. A cornerstone of this engagement is "capacity sharing for development," designed as a collaborative, coordinated, comprehensive and long-term effort to develop, strengthen, adapt and maintain the capacities of individuals and organizations, including those of partners and CGIAR, working toward common goals in partner countries.

Capacity sharing for development is not traditional capacity development but rather about creating structured multi-directional spaces for co-learning and co-creation through collaborative research, training (including South-to-South and South-to-North), leadership building, institutional strengthening, internships, fellowships, secondments and other arrangements of mutual interest, of benefit and high impact for partners and CGIAR.

6. *Please specify which steps CGIAR intends to undertake to protect the existence and functioning of gene banks in Africa which will no longer be part of One CGIAR.*

All CGIAR Centers are committed to continuing to fulfill their obligations under their Article 15 agreements, which are not affected by the One CGIAR reforms. This is true for all CGIAR Centers with Article 15 agreements, including those that have opted not to join in the One CGIAR transition.

While funding from the CGIAR Genebank Initiative is directed to the CGIAR Centers that adopted unified governance, other partners are eligible to receive funding. The door remains open to those Centers that did not join the One CGIAR transition to rejoin the process at any time.

We continue to engage the international genebanks that are not part of the One CGIAR transition on program collaboration and funding opportunities related to conservation and research.

It is also our understanding that donors have begun direct negotiations with Centers that did not join the One CGIAR process around future funding opportunities.

7. Please specify which steps CGIAR intends to undertake to protect the existence and functioning of ILRI in Kenya.

ILRI's Board of Trustees, including representatives of the Center's two headquarters host countries – Ethiopia and Kenya – decided in 2020 to join CGIAR's unified governance arrangement (see response to Statement #1 below). In addition to representation on the ILRI Board, the government of Kenya has been represented on the CGIAR System Council as a member of one of its five regional constituencies.

The ILRI Board and leadership have engaged with the government of Kenya to address questions and concerns over the course of the One CGIAR integration process, with unequivocal assurances that the process is fully aligned with ILRI's constitution, headquarters hosting agreement and applicable laws.

ILRI's Director General is a member of the CGIAR Senior Leadership Team and a signatory to these [principles](#), which reiterate the team's commitment to the One CGIAR transition process of which Centers are the essential building blocks. CGIAR is committed to maintaining its already globally distributed leadership structure, and to operating with subsidiarity as a key principle, while seeking to unlock the benefits of deeper integration and teamwork, including economies of scale and reduced duplication of work.

Consistent with Funders' commitment to increasing investments in CGIAR research and innovations from the CGIAR Trust Fund (pooled funding), investment in livestock research carried out by ILRI is on track to increase in 2022.

Statement #1: *“...the recent governance changes ... represent great risks for the food security and sovereignty of many countries in the Global South, including of the African continent.”*

Fact: The Boards of all CGIAR Centers continue to be structured, with a mixture of members who bring local contextual knowledge and those that bring a diversity of experience, qualification, and knowledge from across the globe. Historically – as now – CGIAR Center Boards comprise between 10 and 16 members, as decided by the Centers themselves according to their governing instruments. In the face of pressing local, regional and global challenges to food security and sovereignty, each Board determined that successful delivery of CGIAR’s 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy requires both the delivery of an interconnected portfolio of [CGIAR Research Initiatives](#), and a more strategic approach to the appointment of those members of their own Boards who bring the regional and global perspective. These were all sovereign decisions of the relevant governing body and taken solely in the best interests of those facing the greatest risk of food insecurity.

Over its first two years in operation, CGIAR’s unified governance arrangement has overseen the successful delivery of CGIAR’s 2030 Research and Innovation Strategy, the design and launch of a new portfolio of CGIAR Initiatives, and an estimated 67 percent increase in funding from the CGIAR Trust Fund towards CGIAR research and innovations in 2022, compared with the average for 2019—21. As a result, CGIAR is today better placed to serve its core mandate, to respond to the global food crisis, and to safeguard food security and sovereignty in the global South.

Statement #2: *“The restructuring process – which is allegedly taking place without consultation with farmers and those by food insecurity and their governments – might have profound impacts on the availability, viability, and even ownership of hundreds of thousands of germplasm accessions and accelerate the influence of private corporations on public agricultural extension and support programmes.”*

Fact: CGIAR’s regional and country constituencies, including host country representatives, have played a strong role in shaping One CGIAR to best address the science-policy nexus. There are 18 countries from the global South represented in five regional constituencies on the CGIAR System Council as voting members. The five regional constituencies agree amongst themselves who is their voting member and alternate member, and how they will work together.

Since the start of the integration process, some of the most powerful statements for moving to operating in a more unified and integrated manner have come repeatedly from those partner country constituencies in the System Council since mid-2018. That is because a priority for the transition is to enable CGIAR’s country partners to access the full range of CGIAR’s global capabilities, without engaging with multiple entities; country partners have long requested that we speak with one voice.

In June, a [high-level Advisory Panel](#) was appointed to advise on ways to further strengthen engagement with partners and stakeholders, particularly in the global South.

A detailed fact sheet of consultations and engagement over the course of the One CGIAR process is available [here](#).

The One CGIAR integration process – including the unified governance arrangement described above – does not in any way alter the conservation, distribution, availability, and sustainable use of the germplasm collections that are managed by CGIAR Centers.

Genebanks remain a cornerstone of CGIAR’s contributions to global food security. CGIAR is the world’s largest steward of plant genetic resources; approximately 90 percent of all germplasm transfer reported under the International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) is distributed by CGIAR genebanks and breeders.

CGIAR’s new [Genebanks Initiative](#) enables us to safeguard global agrobiodiversity through ex-situ and in-situ conservation, and we respond to thousands of requests for germplasm from users in more than 100 countries every year. Through the transition to a more unified and integrated One CGIAR, CGIAR Centers and genebanks will be able to expand their research and innovation while at the same time continuing to distribute germplasm to national partners who are advancing food security and agricultural development within their communities.

Our integration process is carried out in full alignment with each CGIAR Center’s obligations under the ITPGRFA and with respect to the Nagoya Protocol. The international collections held in trust by CGIAR Centers remain under the policy guidance of the governing body of the ITPGRFA.

None of the steps taken to date as part of the One CGIAR integration process have – intentionally or inadvertently – accelerated the influence of private corporations or in any way altered CGIAR’s global public goods mandate.

Statement #3: *“In 2020, CGIAR’s leading financial supporters, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, World Bank, and some bilateral aid agencies, proposed the merger of the CGIAR Research Centers.”*

Fact: The One CGIAR integration process follows a transparent, inclusive, and consultative process led by the multi-stakeholder [CGIAR System Reference Group](#) (SRG) in 2018–19. The SRG included representatives of CGIAR’s System Council – both funders and regional constituencies; the System Management Board, which included Center Board Chairs, Directors General, and independent members; and the conveners of CGIAR’s Board Chairs and Directors General. In addition, the SRG’s work built on consultations with the full group of Center Board Chairs and Directors General, as well as key partners and stakeholders. The SRG’s recommendations were supported by the (then-titled) System Management Board in October 2019 and unanimously endorsed by the System Council in November 2019.

The One CGIAR transition is not a merger of CGIAR’s Research Centers. It is an operational integration process, driving deeper collaboration across Centers while maintaining their legal status and honoring their constitutions, headquarter and hosting agreements, and legal and fiduciary obligations in both letter and spirit. Center Boards retain full governance authorities

over their Centers, while working in close alignment through the unified governance arrangement described above.

Every Center's Director General is a member of CGIAR's distributed [Senior Leadership Team](#) in an integrated matrix structure, with most holding additional roles as Managing Directors, Global Directors, Regional Directors or Senior Directors in Global and Regional Groups that enable closer integration across Centers.

Statement #4: *"... each Center's Board of Trustees would be nominated by headquarters in Montpellier. This would significantly alter the Center's governance structures and render them subsidiaries of One CGIAR. The Director-General of each Center, along with some other senior staff and program leaders, would be compensated from the headquarters since financial flows from donors would be redirected to headquarters rather than to each Centers, which had a wide range of donors and contracts of varying duration, are likely to lose their independent donor case, and the role of the host country and the region is expected to be marginalized."*

Fact: The CGIAR System Organization, headquartered in Montpellier in France, is not, and has never been the "headquarters" of CGIAR. In June 2011, the 15 CGIAR Centers established the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers as a contractual joint venture. The CGIAR System Organization is the successor of the Consortium. The role of the CGIAR System Organization, as stated in the [Charter of the System Organization](#), was approved unanimously by the CGIAR Centers and Funders in June 2016. The fundamental premise of the CGIAR System is an operational partnership where we work to be stronger than the sum of our parts to ensure we can best position our staff to power the transformation of food, land and water systems for the benefit of all. We can only do that if we keep our global footprint of more than 9,000 staff working in more than 90 countries across the globe. The number of full-time staff working in Montpellier is around 45 within that total number, and there has never been a plan to fundamentally change that.

CGIAR is committed to maintaining its already globally distributed leadership structure, and to operating with subsidiarity as a key principle, while seeking to unlock the benefits of deeper integration and teamwork, including economies of scale and reduced duplication of work.

The governing instrument of each Board describes how members of their own Board are appointed. Under the unified governance arrangement described above, eight voting members of each One CGIAR Board are also the voting members of the CGIAR System Board. Every past nomination process for voting members of the CGIAR System Board has involved a multi-stakeholder ad hoc nominations committee that convenes virtually across the world to ensure inclusion of members who bring the voices of countries, System Council members and independent lay persons. This will continue.

It is the Centers who established the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers in 2011. It is the Centers who evolved the contractual joint venture Consortium to the CGIAR System Organization in 2016 as a membership based independent international organization, whose members are the 15 International Agricultural Research Centers. In the One CGIAR integration process, Centers remain essential building blocks of a more impactful CGIAR, retaining their legal status, sovereign Boards, as well as their constitutions and

headquarters agreements. Centers are not and will not become subsidiaries owned or controlled by another entity.

Center Directors General, along with broader leadership and staff, continue to be employed by their Centers and their costs covered through a combination of funding from the CGIAR Trust Fund for initiatives implemented across CGIAR's global science footprint (pooled funding) and bilateral funding received directly by their Center for bilateral projects, not "redirected to headquarters."

An agreed aim of the One CGIAR integration process is to increase the volume and share of pooled funding in CGIAR's funding mix, enabling the design and delivery of larger, more integrated initiatives with a more predictable funding cycle. This is underway, with an estimated 67 percent increase in funding from the CGIAR Trust Fund towards CGIAR research and innovations in 2022, compared with the average for 2019—21. Through the transition, we aim to double current funding to CGIAR Centers and research and innovation, in order to help end hunger, increase incomes to smallholder farmers and communities, and build resilience to climate change.

Statement #5: *"... this restructuring is taking place without formal consultation and involvement in the decision-making of all affected stakeholders, including farmers and the host country authorities, triggering opposition from the Governments and relevant multilateral organisations."*

See above in response to Statement #2.

Statement #6: *"The Governments of Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mexico, as well as the African Union and the African Development Bank, have expressed their concern that One CGIAR is violating their Host Country Agreements and are calling for consultations. It has also been brought to my attention that the governments of India, Indonesia, and Italy have expressed their concern and/or are reviewing their Host-Country Agreements with Centers - some of whom have refused to join One CGIAR and may have an uncertain legal status. Currently, of the 15 CGIAR Centers, the future of the governance structure of at least 7 is in doubt."*

Fact: All CGIAR Centers' governance structures and their legal status remain clear, as set out in their governing instruments and host country agreements. Prior to the move to adopt unified governance, a multi-stakeholder Advisory Group on Unified Governance oversaw the competitive selection for the provision of impartial, independent legal advice from a globally networked international law firm on the legality of unified governance. Members of the Advisory Group included several CGIAR Board Chairs, Legal Counsels of CGIAR Centers, funder representatives and a Director General observer on behalf of all DGs. The underlying workings of the legal opinion were fact-checked and cleared by Center legal teams.

The executive summary of that opinion concluded that: (i) There are no legal impediments for implementing One CGIAR Unified Governance as endorsed by the System Council; and (ii) The implementation of One CGIAR Unified Governance presents an opportunity to move away from the current complex system, which has several flaws from a governance

perspective, to enhance the governance of the Centers and the CGIAR System Organization, and thus the CGIAR System, and to bring it in line with international governance standards and best practices⁴.

Statement #7: *“The new One CGIAR structure, reduces the role and influence of host countries over regional CGIAR Research centers. While at the same time, the new structure captures agricultural research and assets, including Africa's own financial and human resources, that represent a major share of public sector agricultural development on the continent.”*

Host countries and other country and regional partners remain highly valued and important partners, both as representatives on Center Boards and the CGIAR System Council, and as partners and stakeholders in the design and delivery of CGIAR research and innovation. Please refer to the consultation fact sheet above for further details.

Statement #8: *“...One CGIAR is reportedly considering fundamental changes to its research relationship with national agricultural research systems (NARS). Conventionally, NARS establishes its research goals and seeks support from CGIAR Centers. Currently, One CGIAR reportedly is establishing a set of very specific goals and will only work with selected NARS centers.”*

See response #5 in Annex I

Statement #9: *“...over the recent years, CGIAR tends to prioritize digital farming over research which directly benefits vulnerable farmers. For example, the CGIAR Platform for Big Data in Agriculture recently announced that it intends to become the world's largest digital innovation network in agri-food through the transformation to the One CGIAR system. Such moves raise worries that CGIAR's decision-making and research priorities might be increasingly driven by profit.”*

It is inaccurate to imply that CGIAR is prioritizing digital agriculture above other research. The Platform for Big Data was just one program focused on assessing and claiming the potential of digital agriculture among 15 research programs in the last CGIAR research portfolio. In the new portfolio the [Digital Innovation Initiative](#) is one of more than 30.

Our evidence-based innovations are demand led and targeted via a human-centered approach to ensure improved livelihoods and greater social equality, within planetary and regional environmental boundaries. The Platform for Big Data in Agriculture was designed with the recognition of the transformative potential of data and digital tools in agriculture, noting that agriculture was one of the least digitized sectors, digital solutions were out of reach for the majority of small farmers, and that the evidence was too scattered and selective to develop a stakeholder- and evidence-driven theory of change for agricultural research for development.

⁴ <https://storage.googleapis.com/cgiarg/2020/04/Summary-findings-of-the-legal-opinion-on-delivering-unified-governance-under-one-CGIAR.pdf>

There is great potential for the digitalization of agriculture to achieve meaningful livelihood improvements for smallholder farmers and pastoralists. It could drive greater engagement in agriculture from women and youth and create employment opportunities along the value chain. It can boost productivity, profitability and resilience to climate change. We should not avoid engaging with digital agriculture if we aim to be of benefit to the communities we serve. Technology, as we have seen in other sectors, is critical to effecting change and driving development. Greater digital inclusion and bridging the digital divide will bring countries closer together, reducing barriers to trade and offering a window of opportunity to “digital native” youth entrepreneurs.

Statement #10: *“The lack of clarity around the governance of the CGIAR's international gene banks has implications for other international organizations. CGIAR's two forestry centers - Center for International Forestry Research in Indonesia and World Agroforestry in Kenya - allegedly voted against the merger. Most recently, the International Centre for Research in Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) based in India also chose not to be included in One CGIAR.”*

See response #6 in Annex I above.

Statement #11: *“Given FAO's policy oversight over CGIAR's gene banks, the withdrawal of gene banks from CGIAR may impact their obligations to FAO. Beyond FAO, each of the CGIAR gene banks has a contractual arrangement with the Global Crop Diversity Trust based in Germany, which provides technical and financial support to the gene banks. As I understand the FAO, its member states and the Global Crop Diversity Trust have not been formally consulted on these changes.”*

Please refer to our letter above.

Statement #12: *“... the CGIAR gene banks either have - or are in the process of - duplicating their germplasm accessions for storage in the Svalbard Seed Vault in Norway. Under the conditions of storage, only the party entrusting seeds in the vault can retrieve them. Governance changes that create uncertainties with Host Countries could lead to serious problems concerning germplasm regeneration and restoration.”*

See response #6 in Annex I as well as our response to Statement #2 above.

Statement #13: *“The new One CGIAR structure may imperil Africa's rights to these gene bank accessions and has implications for access and benefit-sharing under consideration in the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) as well as under the Nagoya Protocol of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.”*

See response #6 in Annex I as well as our response to Statement #2 above.

Statement #14: *“... the transformation of the governance structure of ILRI will create the centralized, top-heavy bureaucratic management model which is likely to weaken the regional Centers and their livestock research on the ground.”*

See response #7 in Annex I above.

Statement #15: *“...the Kenyan Government has not received any request for termination of the Agreement establishing ILRI and therefore any reform in the CGIAR governance requires awareness of this reality.”*

See response #7 in Annex I above.

Statement #16: *“...the process poses a direct threat the right to self-determination and the ability of states to set their own agricultural research agendas, food sovereignty and the ability for local communities to control their own food system, and regional food security.”*

See response #2 in Annex I above.

Statement #17: *“...the impacts of the merger raise both immediate and long-term human rights concerns, particularly relating to potential violations of the right to food. The allegations represent a threat to democratic and local control of food systems, shifting the governance structure from a coordinated network of local research centers reflecting regional needs to a centralized system primarily influenced by funders. At its core, the human rights approach calls for government accountability as well as the participation of the most affected in policymaking. The merger threatens to lead to increasing capture of food systems by rich funders, reducing the space for governments to legislate and set agricultural agendas as well as shifting the parameters of food systems governance away from those most impacted and local interests. I believe the influence and resources of rich donors should ideally remain within proportions, to avoid any situations where their assistance could lead to exercising pressure over decision making processes.”*

See response #2 in Annex I above, and responses to statements #2 and #4 above.

As a publicly funded network of research institutions, CGIAR seeks to empower smallholder farmers and countries and their national research systems, equipping them with the research and technologies they need to address the many threats to food security. CGIAR does not control policies or practices anywhere in the world.

CGIAR’s Senior Leadership Team, which encompasses the Directors General of all CGIAR Centers that have joined the One CGIAR integration process, is committed to a globally distributed structure and operating with subsidiarity. Through the process, CGIAR aims to better serve its partners and stakeholders at the local, sub-national, national, and regional levels – providing easier access to the full range of its global capabilities.

The changes implemented to date, and those planned, do not in any way alter the influence of funders in CGIAR’s governance. The composition of CGIAR’s System Council, which includes representatives of funders as well as regional constituencies in the global South, remains unchanged since 2016. Indeed, with increasing pooled funding provided through the CGIAR Trust Fund, CGIAR is evolving towards a more multi-lateral funding model, less dependent on a small number of bilateral funders.

Statement #18: *“The merger also puts the future of food production in the Global South into jeopardy, with widespread implications for the right to food realization. There is no question that consolidating control and increasing corporate influence over the gene banks puts at risk not only the seeds contained in them but the right to life in general.”*

Regarding genebanks, see response #6 in Annex I as well as our response to Statement #2 above.

With regards to CGIAR’s contributions towards global food security and food sovereignty, an agreed aim of the One CGIAR integration process is to increase the volume and share of pooled funding in CGIAR’s funding mix, enabling the design and delivery of larger, more integrated initiatives with a more predictable funding cycle. This is underway, with an estimated 67 percent increase in funding from the CGIAR Trust Fund towards CGIAR research and innovations in 2022, compared with the average for 2019—21. Through the transition, we aim to double current funding to CGIAR Centers and research and innovation, to help end hunger, increase incomes to smallholder farmers and communities, and build resilience to climate change.

Statement #19: *“When research is fueled by profits, it often misses those most affected by food insecurity, fails to take account of their needs, neglects local knowledge, and proposes high-cost technical-oriented solutions that further stratify and impoverish rural areas and historically have worked to the detriment of rural people and the environment (for example by focusing on increasing food production at the cost of accessibility and sustainability). Public research is also essential because it can take into account different expertise, from traditional knowledge to experience working on the ground, etc. Increasing CGIAR consolidation will not be to the benefit of producing research essential to the transitions our food systems must undergo to realize the right to food today and in the future.”*

See response #2 in Annex I above, and responses to statements #2, #4, and #17 above.

Statement #20: *“...the centralization of the Centers as One CGIAR may increase external domination of Africa's agricultural future and promote public-private partnerships which may effectively surrender Africa's resources to the interests of multinational agribusiness.”*

See response #2 in Annex I above, and responses to statements #2, #4, and #17 above.

Statement #21: *“I encourage CGIAR to initiate inclusive regional conversations on the future of international public agricultural research, beyond the creation of One CGIAR, and consider better alternatives to it with the active participation of and consultation with governments, researchers, agricultural workers, international organisations and the civil society representatives of all concerned countries.”*

See responses to statements #5 and #2 above.

Statement #22: *“In making management decisions, Governments and farmers should be seen as equal partners and stakeholders of CGIAR, especially considering the valuable contributions*

they have made over the years. I wish to add that without the strong support of governments for the CGIAR Centers in Africa, One CGIAR will fail on the continent.”

Please see our cover letter above, including recent statements by African leaders in food security and nutrition, and reference to the [agreement](#) between the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa and CGIAR aimed at aligning efforts to boost food and nutrition security on the continent.