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FACT SHEET

USAID Support for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

Overview

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) is a strategic partnership of developed and developing countries, international organizations and foundations that support the work of 15 international agricultural research centers. These centers conduct research and promote technology transfers aimed at achieving sustainable food security and reducing poverty in developing countries. Specifically, CGIAR research focuses on increasing sustainable production and incomes, sustaining biodiversity, improving natural resources management, addressing the impacts of climate change on food security and improving policies to reduce poverty and hunger.

USAID support for the CGIAR is an important component of the U.S. Government's comprehensive approach to improving global food security. This strategy emphasizes the importance of **partnerships** in finding country-led solutions to world hunger and acknowledges the key role **science and technology** plays in boosting agricultural productivity.

In FY 2009 USAID provided almost \$30 million in core support to the CGIAR system. USAID provides specific CGIAR research centers another \$25-30 million annually for targeted research and technology dissemination efforts.

FY 2008 Research Highlights

- **Averting a Wheat Stem Rust Epidemic:** Wheat stem rust is one of the major diseases devastating wheat production in Asia and Africa, causing yield losses of 70-100 percent. Economists estimate that a full-blown global epidemic of stem rust could cost \$10 billion a year and trigger widespread hunger. USAID support for CGIAR centers such as the **International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)** and the **International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA)**, working in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has led to the multiplication of wheat varieties that are resistant to a new strain of stem rust, Ug99, and can boost yields by 10-15 percent. These new varieties have been deployed in South and Southwest Asia, Egypt and Ethiopia.
- **Increasing Wheat Production in Ethiopia:** Drought tolerant wheat varieties developed by CIMMYT with USAID support reached over 80 percent of the wheat acreage in Ethiopia, leading to nearly a tripling of yields over the levels of ten years earlier. The added value of the additional wheat produced by Ethiopia's smallholders reached nearly \$1 billion, providing vital income and greater access to food, while at the same time saving foreign exchange and reducing the need for food assistance.

- **Improving Fisheries Management in Bangladesh:** Freshwater fisheries in Bangladesh provide vital food and income for millions of households. In FY 2008, USAID support for the **WorldFish Center**, working with national and NGO partners, led to the adoption of sustainable management practices to be implemented by community management of the 12,000 open water bodies in the country. By the end of 2008, more than 90 percent of the community groups remained active and three-fourths of them reported fish catch increases averaging 30 percent.
- **Boosting rice production in South Asia:** In FY 2008, USAID's support to the **International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)**, a CGIAR center, and its collaborative work with the University of California Davis and Asian partners, led to the release of new, flood-tolerant varieties of rice in South Asia. In some of that region's poorest areas, the new IRRI rice varieties will help smallholder, food-insecure farm families withstand the impact of deep water early in the season, which can lead to losses of over 50 percent.
- **Improving Soil Fertility in Zambia and Malawi:** The CGIAR's **International Center for Agroforestry Research (ICRAF)** developed and disseminated, through partnerships with farmer organizations, NGOs and other partners, a system that integrates nitrogen-fixing trees into cropland in Africa. Without using additional fertilizer, the trees increased yields by 50-300 percent, adding roughly 130 kg of nitrogen to each hectare. In 2008, country-level farmers' unions reported that this sustainable system has been adopted by 120,000 farm families in Zambia and 100,000 in Malawi.
- **Enabling Sustainable Cereal Production in South Asia:** In the **Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia (CSISA)** IRRI, CIMMYT, the **International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)**, and the **International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)** are partnering with national agricultural research organizations, education and extension systems, non-government organizations, and private-sector companies to enable sustainable cereal production in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. CSISA aims to reverse the declines in annual cereal yield growth of recent years, decrease hunger and malnutrition, and increase food and income security in South Asia. Adaptation to climate change is major focal area for the program. Through the accelerated development and deployment of new heat- and drought-tolerant cereal varieties and sustainable cropping systems management practices, CSISA is helping farmers in South Asia maintain crop yields in the face of growing climate change impacts.
- **Realizing Benefits from Forestry Research:** The **Center for International Forestry Policy's (CIFOR)** investment in policy-oriented research on forestry and the environment has led to substantial impacts, according to a recent CIFOR study. The study measured the degree to which CIFOR's research led to saving natural forests and the value of the resulting nonmarket benefits, such as reduced carbon emissions. These benefits, estimated at \$133 million, were achieved with less than half a million dollars in direct research costs.