

## **OPENING SPEECH ON THE OCCASION OF IVC ANNUAL WORKSHOP**

**16-19 February 2004, Bamako, Mali**

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The IVC President, Ahmed Lamin, The Director General IER, Dr Bino Témé The Country Representative ICRISAT, Dr Bony Ntare,

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Dr. Kanayo F. Nwanze the Director General of WARDA–The Africa Rice Center, it is my great pleasure in welcoming you all to WARDA Bamako station. I recognize the presence of the IVC Consortium Management Committee, representatives of FAO, CORAF, Netherlands and French Governments. In addition, participants have come from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo and Senegal. There are scientists from IWMI, ICRAF, ICRISAT, AVRDC, WARDA and two former IVC Coordinators are here with us to provide continuity. I take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to the new IVC Regional Coordinator, Philippe Morant who took up his appointment from the beginning of January 2004 and I thank Paul Kiepe, the Scientific Coordinator, for acting as IVC Regional Coordinator prior to the appointment of Philippe. WARDA continues to attract new blood and Philippe, Sylvester Oikeh in the audience and I, are among the eight appointees recently made by WARDA. We are delighted to work with you not only this week but also in the future. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Government of Mali who is currently our host at the Bamako based operations. They have been very supportive in our work and our being here has strengthened the collaboration between Mali and WARDA in addressing rice production systems in this unique ecology. While WARDA headquarters remain in Côte d'Ivoire, I wish to assure you that its investments in M'bé are safe and intact, a point I will revisit later in my address.

This week is a very special one for IVC, which is celebrating its first decade since its inception. Congratulations IVC for having survived that long. My memory tells me that although TAC approved the launching of CGIAR Systemwide Programs in 1994/95, IVC was in existence as early as 1993. Therefore the original IVC is actually older than the TAC approved IVC. As some of you know IVC was part of EPTHA, one of the Ecoregional Systemwide Programs convened by IITA. A common thread is that IVC has always been associated with WARDA. I feel privileged to have been allied to IVC since I was a member of the panel chaired by Ted Henzell that reviewed the eight Ecoregional Programs. I recall visiting one of the sites near Yaoundé, Cameroon. While serving TAC I had an interest in following IVC activities and now in my position I have the dual responsibility as a member of the Management Committee and Director of Research at WARDA.

When IVC became part of WARDA's programs some raised doubts why that decision was made. Today I can tell you that from experience of having overseen the review by TAC and the CGIAR of over twelve SWPs, a pattern for successful SWPs has emerged. The successful ones are those which enjoy strong support and ownership by a center. That possession does not come if a SWP is outside the purview of the Board. I therefore concur with the decision to bring IVC under the full umbrella of WARDA. A few other shortcomings of SWPs are the lack of accountability to the Boards, often when one reads most of the centers' annual reports very little or nothing is said about SWPs. Similarly the center MTPs often do not reflect clearly how the SWPs interact with other center programs. It is equally difficult to trace the finances assigned to SWPs. These are general observations on SWPs and I hope that IVC has done better since its incorporation within WARDA. If not then I have big task ahead of me. Donor support to SWPs has been mixed but in general

below the expectation of the CGIAR in 1995 and extremists put it as abandonment of SWPs by donors. We should ask ourselves why. IVC is fortunate to have enjoyed the patronage of its original donors. However, a time has come when we should take stock because the world has changed not only in the CGIAR but also in the entire external environment. Our NARS partners well represented here today are much stronger than they were in 1995 or even 1999 when I read the last review of IVC. The state of ICT, GIS, modeling and institutional frameworks have made it possible to adopt different kinds of work style. The demand for sharing knowledge against the IPR regime poses additional challenge for IVC and its partners.

At this juncture, let me now turn to WARDA for a moment. The BoT approved the Strategic Plan for 2003–2012, a copy of which I believe is around the room. The CGIAR also approved a New Vision and Strategy in October 2000. Updating of the CGIAR Strategy initiated by the interim Science council late 2002 is soon to be finalized by the new SC. In the meantime several things have come into play: The WFS-fyl, in June 2002 showed that the goal of halving the number of hungry people in the world by 2015 will not be met. Of the 800 million hungry mouths, 240 million mainly women and children are in Africa. Parallel initiatives such as the Millennium Development goals, NEPAD, Challenge Program for Sub-Saharan Africa have been launched to reduce poverty and eliminate food insecurity in the continent in which IVC is based. Because of the food security concern most of these initiatives are focusing on Africa and Asia, continents with the highest increase in population and uppermost demand for food over next decade. One of the greatest achievements of WARDA and its partners is pioneering the development of the New Rice for Africa (NERICA), which brings hope to millions of poor people in Africa. WARDA has therefore supported the creation of several networks such ARI, ROCARIZ to promote wide scale diffusion of NERICAs and complimentary technologies. WARDA work definitely embraces the lowland and irrigated rice production ecologies, the latter of direct implication to IVC. WARDA recognizes that there exist intimate linkages within the toposequence encompassing upland, lowland and irrigated continuum. No matter whether you call inland valleys wetlands, Dambos, they are the obvious home for rice production and biodiversity. Because inland valleys have a steady supply of moisture for plants throughout the year they are a meeting point for livestock, vegetable and fish production. WARDA in partnership with AVDRC is investigating the potential of inland valleys for vegetable production during the off-season when rice is not grown.

Today at WARDA we have embarked on revitalization of the Research Division. Part of the revitalization is increased accountability requiring scientists to forge amplified interaction with partners, co-authorship, joint project proposal preparation and implementation and joint answerability to our stakeholders especially the farmers. I appeal to IVC to ride this revitalization bus with us. We expect to make it a ride with a difference. It is necessary because our stakeholders are demanding better efficiency in whatever we do. For example NEPAD and the CGIAR is talking about peer reviews at all levels. Performance Measurement Indicators introduced by the World Bank in 2003 calls for a culture of self-evaluation across the board. The message is very clear to us that it is no longer business as usual. How does IVC reposition itself in this new external environment?

To respond to some of these challenges, IVC needs to re-examine its modus operandi. I am encouraged to note that the proposed IVC strategy intend to:

- Capitalize and valorize the results (characterization of inland valley, improved technologies, socio-economic approach, technology transfer methodologies and data base sharing and management)
- Develop new method of monitoring inland valley evolution
- Develop new method of modeling
- Improve management of regional data bases for research and development
- Develop new partnership with NARS (Gambia, Uganda, Chad etc.)

- Renovate partnership with international institutions according to their involvement in the activities of IVC.

I am glad that the agenda on Thursday features five presentations from WARDA scientists reflecting closure integration of IVC in WARDA programs. IVC is participating in the Challenge Program on Water and Food but could play a greater role than is currently projected. It is the IVC that can make a stronger case for the Niger and Volta Basins to be covered by the CP on Water and Food. There is still room to be involved in the SSA CP and expanding the mandate to the rest of Africa alongside WARDA. I note that CMC will touch on a number of the issues I have referred to. Most importantly, since the current phase II project is ending in 2004, it is urgent that the preparation of phase III proposal be kicked off. Actually it is already late if you have to launch a third phase of IVC in January 2005. The groundwork for that new proposal would benefit from an external evaluation in the same fashion Phase I was informed by the second review conducted by donors. It is also a high time IVC consider broadening its donor base beyond the current two. I do not see for example why IVC cannot attract support from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), which has a window on biodiversity and wetlands. Players such IUCN with credible scientific record as well as commitment to conservation should now be involved in the activities of IVC. Whether expanding the donor catchments will necessitate a new Steering Committee/Management Committee is an issue better handled through an external evaluation?

As far as WARDA is concerned the commissioning of a CCER would be welcome and timely move in the right direction. I therefore look forward to the recommendations of the CMC for informing and seeking direction from the WARDA Management and eventually BoT. As I have already stated thriving SWP are the ones supported by Centers. I would recommend you read the external review report of CAPRI chaired by John Bruce of the World Bank. I also served as the panel Secretary for that panel. Among the twelve SWPS so far reviewed, CAPRI is considered as a good model and that is why I believe the lessons from that SWPs are worth noting. I would be willing to shed some light on the good practice, which has enabled them to deliver tangible products with limited resources. An external review would not only be essential for donors and scientific partners but would equally facilitate the synthesis of lessons learnt from IVC for the benefit of its stakeholders WARDA included. To sum it up we have reached a cross road in IVC and the way ahead is the hands of you here this week. We shall work with you in designing that new road map if you are willing to collaborate.

In concluding I would like to wish you a very productive week. I see you have a very busy schedule between Monday through Thursday. Thank you for choosing to meet at WARDA. Our scientists continue to implement their research activities from Bamako using the facilities made available by ICRISAT. Some of our soil scientists are housed at shared facilities within IER Sotuba, and for biotechnology at the University of Mali, Molecular Biology unit. We have field sites in Sikasso and in 2003 our researchers were able to carry out experiments at the Samanko Farm and will continue to do so in 2004. In view of peace returning to Côte d'Ivoire, it is our hope that shortly more work will be conducted from M'bé as. We are grateful to the organizations I have mentioned above but also to our 50 regular staff at M'bé who have remained there despite the crisis. They together with another 60–70 daily workers have sustained the research facilities in addition to multiplying seeds, maintaining the genebank at M'bé, laboratories, offices, library, workshops dam, various items of field equipment. If you went to M'bé today you would find a center in top-notch condition. When the DG and I visited Bouaké three weeks ago we were impressed the tempo of activities to an extent that in March three scientists will spend three weeks there pre-testing a return to Bouaké plan. WARDA Management has now intensified the program of visit in preparation for future smooth return.

Before I conclude, I would like to bring out four salient point of my address:

1. First and foremost is the need for IVC to expand its ecoregional program beyond West and Central Africa, to address the pertinent issues of inland valleys as well as expanding its activities with partners in East and Southern Africa.
2. The conduct of the external review should be considered as a Center Commissioned External Review (CCER) to be commissioned by the WARDA Board of Trustees where donor representatives and partners will be invited to nominate potential candidates as panel members. Once again for the credibility of the review to members of the CGIAR and partners the WARDA Board will receive and discuss the review report.
3. The diversification of funding base should be an important part of the IVC evolution and the reality of our times. No single donor will support one program forever. This diversification is also linked to the complexity of our work requiring multiple partnerships in crafting solutions. One of the core principles of the ecoregional programs is to diversify partnership and that goes with funding.
4. IVC as an expert consortium should be a reference Systemwide Program drawing on its rich database, producing relevant peer review journal articles and awarding grants based on competitive bidding where the Steering Committee or CMC makes decision backed by independent scientific advice on individual proposals. This in the long run will enhance accountability.

Once again I thank the donors of IVC, the Coordinator of IVC and the entire team for organizing this workshop. My personal appreciation to the management of Hôtel Mandé and to you individually and collectively for making this workshop possible. WARDA looks forward to receiving the proceedings of the workshop as soon as possible. I hope you find time to visit Bamako and its environment. With these remarks, I now declare the 2004 IVC workshop opened.

Thank you.