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INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ON SAFGRAD STRATEGIC PLAN AND
PERSONS CONTACTED IN WASHINGTON D.C.

8 - 9 June, 1990 Mr L. Hilman and Paul R. Anemosa

Regarding the outcome of their brief visit to SAFGRAD, they commented that their observation on the performance of SAFGRAD Networks was positive. It was, however, stressed that more information on the future plan on SAFGRAD networks is necessary. Dr P.R. Anemosa suggested if some copies of the Strategic Plan could be made available to relevant offices in Africa Bureau. Three copies of the plan were provided. In separate meeting with Dr Anemosa, I indicated that the briefing I am pursuing is an unofficial capacity since I was on leave.

11th June, 1990 - During the morning, I met Mr C. Martin who did receive advanced copy of the Strategic Plan. On the contents of the plan, he made the following comments:

1. That a section of the plan should also emphasize soil fertility and water management research activities
2. It would be necessary to link training programme of networks with activities of Faculty of Agriculture in Africa.
3. It is gratifying to note that networks have evolved scheme that could streamline the evaluation of germplasm.
4. The plan contains relevant information that could lead to the development of SAFGRAD III in Networking.

In the improvement of the Strategic Plan, further effort should be exerted to address the following important issues:

- a. What has been the impact of the project?
- b. Are farmers better off with application of new technologies?
- c. Are there success stories to indicate that investment in agricultural research is paying off - in sub-Saharan Africa?
- d. Identify impact indicators as an outcome of the project implementation.

11 June, 1990 - In the afternoon, discussion with Mr ^{R.} W. Newberg was held. His office manages the SARFA networks. We discussed the various aspect of the Strategic Plan. He commended on the efforts made and relevance of the information included in the plan.

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After lengthy discussion, the basic difference that of SARFA and SAFGRAD Networks was apparent. The former is largely donor and IARCs driven and the latter increasingly NARS managed. Some of the issues he raised are:

1. Why fund SCO since networks could also be managed by IARCS through donor support? It was commented that SCO supports network operations in various aspects: provides legal and political umbrella, movement of germplasm, mobility of scientists and exchange of technical information. Furthermore, the SCO being under OAU, rallies NARS institutions and governments for network support. SAFGRAD II, has devolved SCO capabilities for network development and management. SCO could play key role towards transfer of networks management from IARCs to NARS.

2. Costs of sustaining networks as presented in the plan somewhat high. Is there possibility of combining or fusing the Sorghum and Millet networks in West and Central Africa? Comments were made that, the proposed funding for long-term training and collaborative research and support to weak NARS have increased costs. These supports are necessary in order to develop NARS research capabilities.

3. Suggestion was made that Strategic Plan may need to be discussed during Networking sessions of SPAAR in the future. This could enable more donors to participate in SAFGRAD Networks

4. From USAID point of view, it was commented that providing or channeling funds to the IARCs administratively easier than SCO. For example, the USAID/Burkina Mission thus far managed SAFGRAD project in general and funds in particular. This responsibility has been additional work to the USAID-Mission in Burkina. It was reported that SCO has now developed sound financial administrative and research coordination capabilities in managing networks.

5. Sustainability of networks

After lengthy discussion on the issue, it was commented that the SAFGRAD Networks major goal is to gradually shift network operations and management from IARCs to NARS. This process is in progress of which SCO plays critical role.

6. What is the USAID/Burkina Mission view and official stand on the Strategic Plan? It was commented that the Mission has closely followed the development of the networks Strategic Plan. Its official comment may be received soon.

For later consideration via SPAAR

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19 June, 1990 - Afternoon Meeting at SPAAR

I met Drs Toure and P.T.Y. Pee, Officers of SPAAR secretariat. SPAAR - is under pressure to implement projected programmes. I was informed that SPAAR would initially support research activities in the Sahel and SADC countries - as part of its regional research activity. It was pointed out to the officials of SPAAR that the Networking Group could also discuss the SAFGRAD Networks Strategic Plan. It was commented that donors of SPAAR usually do not make pledges at its regular meeting. SPAAR may, however, assist in circulating the plan to donors. Since SAFGRAD project activities have regional dimension, it was also suggested that the Strategic Plan could be submitted as a major proposal to the chairman of SPAAR. I was encouraged by Deputy Executive Secretary of SPAAR for SCO to take such action without delay.

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1986

Framework for the long term planning of SAFGRAD REPORT OF A TEAM OF CONSULTANTS: Part II The Institutional Patterns Underlying Linkage Building by SAFGRAD.

BOSSO, N'GUETTA

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