

Upholding people's control on agriculture

Asserting farmer-centered agri-research and systems

Standing for science and technology for the people

By **AGHAM- Advocates of Science and Technology for the People**

People's Street Conference against CGIAR

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The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) was created in 1971 and supports a system of 16 centers around the world. It is the coordinating organization, through which funds for international agricultural research are administered to various centers. Sponsors of the CGIAR are the WB, UNDP, FAO, donor countries, the US being one of the largest, and international and regional organizations, and private foundations, advised by a technical advisory committee of leading scientists from developed and developing countries.

In the 1960s IRRI was created supposedly to achieve food productivity and food sufficiency. Eleven years after that, CGIAR, where IRRI was consolidated as one of its institutions, was created supposedly to contribute to sustainable improvements in the productivity of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in developing countries in ways that enhance nutrition and well-being, especially of low income people, through international research and related activities, and in partnership with national research systems. Contrary to these stated goals, CGIAR and its institutions have failed to contribute significantly to the development of agricultural industries where it is most needed.

The governments that adopted IRRI programs, under the direction of the CGIAR, imposed upon their farmers a scheme that shall increase harvest through the heavy use of chemical inputs. After the so-called "Green Revolution" farmers are more impoverished and poisoned by the very chemicals they used. Our farmlands have been devastated and our rice gene pool depleted. After years of following IRRI programs, the country is nowhere near establishing its own rice industry, and is in fact importing increasing amounts of rice every year.

The 16 international institutions under CGIAR also failed to contribute significantly to the development of agricultural industries where it is most needed, contrary to its aim of delivering sustainable improvements and productivity in developing countries. In the Philippines, we are nowhere near establishing our own livestock industry, dairy industry, and other agricultural industries.

The institutions under the direction of CGIAR develop technologies that makes way for plunder and control by large agro-chemical transnational corporations (TNCs) who in turn control more than 95% of the market. These same agrochem TNCs also invests over US\$ 7B in private agri research and provides a large amount of the US\$ 350 million of the CGIAR system funds. This monopoly of technology and research and development veers away from the needs of the farmers towards increasing profit and makes farmers even more dependent on agro-chem TNCs for seeds and chemical inputs. These technologies were pushed even without addressing the issue of landlessness of farmers and the need for genuine agrarian reform.

The kind of science and technology that CGIAR promotes is clearly science for profit. What farmers and our people need is science and technology for the people--- science that will address their most immediate needs.

Uphold science and technology for the people!

Only the large agro-chem TNCs benefit most from the CGIAR and its institutions. In its 42-year existence, IRRI has done nothing but enslave farmers, plunder, threaten health and the environment. The creation of CGIAR in 1971 even broadened the control of agro-chemical TNCs in other fields of agriculture—including livestock, forestry, and fisheries. IRRI and CGIAR are failed research institutions and they should be dismantled. These are the tools of the large foreign owned transnational corporations, and their governments behind them, to dominate and control agriculture in the third world.

The People's Street Conference is being held as an answer to CGIAR as it holds another delusive annual general meeting, ironically in the Philippines. AGHAM, as advocates of science and technology for the people, unite with the people in the call to uphold people's control on agriculture and assert farmer-centered agri-research and systems.

Within the framework of "Upholding people's control on agriculture" and "Assert farmer-centered agri-research and systems", it is correct to call for dismantling because upholding people's control means resisting any and all forms of domination --- of which the CGIAR is a very real example. Asserting farmer-centered agri-research and systems without calling for the dismantling of the CGIAR is incomplete because letting the CGIAR continue with its plunder of resources and as a tool of the agro-chemical TNCs to propagate its kind of agriculture will render farmer-centered efforts always on the sideline.

Uphold science and technology for the people!