Dear CGIAR colleagues,

We hope this message finds you safe and well.

On 1 September, the three of us took on our positions as Managing Directors in CGIAR’s inaugural Executive Management Team (EMT). We are deeply honored to be chosen for this role and recognize the responsibility it places on us.

As a team, our principal collective role is to provide coordinated leadership of CGIAR as it transitions to a more unified and more impactful ‘One CGIAR’. Individually, we have distinct but closely interrelated focus areas - on research delivery and impact (Claudia), institutional strategy and systems (Elwyn), and global engagement and innovation (Kundhavi).

**What motivated us to take on these roles?**

First, we have tremendous confidence in all of you, CGIAR’s people. We are convinced that CGIAR’s excellent scientists and staff can deliver more when brought together under fewer institutional boundaries; with stronger incentives to work together; and supported by clearer, unified, and empowered management and governance. Our main Funders and partners agree, which is why the CGIAR System Council endorsed the One CGIAR recommendations last year.

Second, we have confidence in CGIAR’s leadership. CGIAR’s leaders have had the vision and courage to help define a new destination for us as One CGIAR. Another demonstration of this leadership has been the effective and coordinated response to the extraordinary challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past six months. It has illustrated some of the reasons why we should urgently become One CGIAR, and what we can achieve if we work together in much more integrated way.

Third, we have confidence in CGIAR’s capacity to change. We have an incredible 50-year track record of working with partners to translate groundbreaking research on agriculture, food, forests, land, and water systems into tangible development outcomes on the ground. As we now look to transform ourselves to better tackle the challenges of the next 50 years, there is much that we can learn from and build on. Like in the past, we are facing changes in our operating environment and must adapt. One CGIAR is about doing so together.

Finally, for reasons that we see, hear, and read about every day, CGIAR’s offer to the world is more relevant than ever. A climate crisis, a sixth mass extinction, and – recently – COVID-19 are just some examples of global threats that have their roots in an unsustainable food system; and they pose immediate risks to our ability to end hunger and achieve or safeguard key development outcomes. At the same time, our food, land, and water systems hold the keys to a more sustainable future. Ultimately, we need to completely transform these systems to feed a growing population healthy diets without further risking the stability of the natural processes that sustain our existence.

**The way forward as we see it**

As an EMT, we commit to transparency and openness. In that spirit, we want to be very transparent about the way forward as we see it. We have no illusions about the scale of the task at hand: over the coming three months, we will need to present a final 2030 Research Strategy, a draft 2022—24
Investment Plan, and a proposal for an integrated operational structure for One CGIAR, and that is only the beginning. Coming together, ready to deliver from January 2022 is a momentous challenge. Yet, with your help, we remain convinced that we can succeed and that we have no alternative but to do so.

Indeed, it is essential that we not lose momentum. Over the past eighteen months, our Funders, partners, Board members, as well as Center and Alliance leadership have gone above and beyond the call of duty to help shape One CGIAR through the System Reference Group, the Transition Consultation Forum, and the Transition Advisory Groups. We now need to build on their shared vision and make it a reality – we owe it to our stakeholders.

In the weeks and months ahead, we look forward to drawing on your world-class scientific knowledge, your institutional memory, and strategic skills to help implement this transition. We will set out modalities to do so in each of the key One CGIAR work streams, building – where possible – on the convening power of our excellent communities of practice. We encourage all of you to stay informed about the transition by reading our newsletters and following updates on the One CGIAR landing page. We are particularly excited to interact with many of you in our first all-staff webinar today.

**We want to hear from you**

We understand that on the flipside of our excitement is genuine uncertainty and concern. We know that we are asking for a lot of patience and tolerance for ambiguity, and you may feel that the solutions we propose do not solve the issues you face in your day-to-day. To help address your concerns, and to understand your perspectives, we want to hear from you – for better or worse. As part of this transition, we will introduce ways to stay in touch and receive your feedback.

Colleagues, thank you for everything you do for CGIAR and our mission. We could not be prouder to work with you.

Sincerely,

Claudia, Elwyn, and Kundhavi

**Claudia Sadoff** – Executive Management Team Convener and Managing Director, Research Delivery and Impact

**Elwyn Grainger-Jones** – Managing Director, Institutional Strategy and Systems

**Kundhavi Kadiresan** – Managing Director, Global Engagement and Innovation