

March 6, 1973

Dear Clarence:

Please find herewith a file note on the subject of CIMMYT/India Maize Germplasm Collecting, Storage and Utilization.

It will be appreciated if you will review this file note and be prepared to discuss it with me in the course of your planned visit on March 20. In particular, I would call your attention to the suggestion that it might be mutually advantageous to both CIMMYT and India if it were practical for CIMMYT to designate an agent in India to perform certain services in connection with the implementation of the proposal. In the final analysis, CIMMYT may not choose to propose this and, if proposed, they might not be acceptable to GOI. However, I should like you know that the alternative came up for discussion and for you to be prepared to take a position in the event an overture should be received.

Best regards,

Sincerely,

Ordway Starnes
Field Director
Indian Agricultural Program

Encl.

Dr Clarence C. Gray III
New York Mail

P.S. An appt. for you with Dr Swaminathan confirmed for 3.30 p.m.
on 20 March.

FILE NOTE:

CIMMYT/INDIA Maize Germplasm Collecting, Storage and Utilization

This note treats several discussions held 22 February-3 March in the course of a visit to India by Dr Mauricio Guterrez of CIMMYT with Indian officials. In most cases OS arranged appointments and accompanied MG in discussions with M.S. Swaminathan, Director General, ICAR, A.B. Joshi, Director, IARI, H.K. Jain, Head, Division of Genetics, IARI, Joginder Singh, Coordinator, All India Maize Improvement Scheme, Bhag Singh and Hardas, Plant Introduction Division, IARI, and others.

MG explained that the depletion of world plant germplasm resources is of particular concern to FAO, to the International Biological Program, and to The Rockefeller Foundation. To the present time most activity has been devoted to assessment of situation, stimulation of interest by the public, governments and international agencies. Some planning of action programs and to a minor degree actual collection and storage of certain germplasm. In recent years, the RF has been advised by a number of committees on the type and extent of action needed to ensure adequate collection of maize, wheat, rice, sorghum and millets. As a result, the RF is making available funds to certain institutions to not only supervise but also to take an active role in stimulating governments and other agencies to become directly and actively involved in all aspects of collection, preservation and the utilization of certain germplasm.

A number of gaps in collections have been identified. During 1970 and 1971 the maize germplasm resources committee under the chairmanship of William L. Brown, Director of Research, pioneered, examined scope and status of collections in the major maize germplasm banks of Mexico, South and North America. He found that a large part of the collections made in the past twenty years are still in storage in a viable condition at one or more centers. Plans for some consolidation and a more orderly maintenance of materials have been formulated and are in process of being implemented.

An examination of the geographic distribution of the maize germplasm in storage revealed that certain areas of the world in which maize is an important food source are not represented in the germplasm bank. For the most part these are isolated areas difficult to reach and with little contact with modern agriculture. These areas need be collected immediately. In order of priority, they are (1) Brazil (2) Himalayas, (3) Peru (4) Ecuador (5) Colombia (6) Bolivia. The two most critical areas are Brazil and the Himalayas. It is expected that Efraim Heinandez of the National School of Agriculture, Mexico, will collect the Brazil-Amazonas area and the immediate objective is to arrange for the collecting of the North East Frontier Agency - Himalayan area of India.

On 1 March MG and OS called on Swaminathan for purposes of ascertaining the interest of India in a cooperative collecting effort in the NEFA area and if so procedure to be observed in gaining sanction in India for the proposal.

MSS noted that India has completed two years of a five-year program on maize collecting in the NEFA area. He advised that India would like CIMMYT support in order to accelerate this effort, suggested that ICAR would entertain a CIMMYT overture of grant support, and gave assurance that IARI would be prepared to cooperate in drawing up a proposal.

MG and OS then consulted with Dr A.B. Joshi and Dr H.K. Jain of IARI, following which meetings were held with Joginder Singh and Bhag Singh for purposes of developing details of a proposal to be initiated by CIMMYT.

India has had one team comprised of two professional collectors, two fieldmen, one driver, and an interpreter equipped with one jeep vehicle. Joginder Singh noted the five year scheme for this team and ancillary services and facilities in IARI are costed at Rs 13.5 million.

India has now collected the following percentages of areas indicated: Assam 80; Bhutan 20; Manipur 70; Meghalaya 40; Mizoram 70; Nagaland 50; Sikkim 50; and Tripura 20.

India proposes to finish collecting these areas in the next two years and to devote its fifth and final year of the present project to the further collection of the central and western Himalayan hills area and to the Deccan plateau.

Given CIMMYT support, India would propose to add two teams, thereby having a total of three teams in the field in 1973 and 1974.

Maps of NEFA were studied in detail as to the best disposition of the proposed three teams in 1973, and agreement was reached with MG regarding the integration of the CIMMYT/India-funded effort. The budgetary requirements for the two additional teams for 1973 and 1974 were detailed. The total was Rs 248,600. This exceeds the \$20,000 tentatively allocated by CIMMYT for use in India. In discussing alternatives for bringing the cost within the amount of funds available, OS noted that certain of the capital items required for the teams, specifically cameras and field vehicles, can, with the agreement of ICAR, be gifted by IAP to ICAR and placed at the disposal of the ICAR teams.

Dr Jain suggested to MG that it would be helpful if CIMMYT might have the capability of employing local personnel and facilities for procuring materials and supplies as there are a number of bureaucratic constraints to this function being performed by the ICAR/IARI. He suggested that CIMMYT request IAP to perform the services. OS made no objection, but noted that this would require both ICAR and RF/NY concurrence.

Following agreement on the nature of cooperative work proposed, MG and OS called on Mr Koshi, Additional Secretary in the ICAR, to firstly ascertain his attitude on the matter of ICAR accepting surplus IAP equipment, specifically cameras and vehicles, and making these available to the project - he advised that IAP might defer the actual gifting and physically transfer all these equipment to ICAR and, instead, hand it over to the IARI project leader, noting that this would conform with our present working relationship and would avoid the possibility that the equipment, if gifted and handed over to ICAR, might become absorbed in other project activities.

OS considered this a reasonable procedure, but noted that it would delay the time when these items might be taken off IAP inventory.

The second issue was whether ICAR would prefer to have CIMMYT support in the form of a grant all of which would be administered by ICAR/IARI or whether there would be an advantage to India for CIMMYT to make a portion of the grant funds available to ICAR/IARI and the remainder of the funds set for the employment of personnel and the purchase of certain goods and services expended through a CIMMYT agent in India - Joshi noted that IARI may be required to obtain an establishment even for post proposed for support under an external grant. If this proved to be the case, there was also the possibility that the post might need be advertised and considered that it might be highly advantageous for CIMMYT to have a capability for purchasing and employing local personnel. Accordingly, it was agreed that MG would first return to CIMMYT, draft a proposal for consideration by Keith Finlay, Haldore Hansen, addressed to M.S. Swaminathan, and that consideration would be given to the inclusion of a statement such as "CIMMYT would be prepared to make a grant for _____ purposes or, alternatively, to make an allocation in amount of _____ and with the agreement of GOI to arrange that the remainder of the grant be administered by a CIMMYT agent in India which agent would be agreeable to ICAR."

The implications of this proposal to IAP are (1) the appropriateness of IAP delaying the actual gifting and transfer of IAP cameras and vehicles to ICAR in order to temporarily retain custody of these and to effect their assignment to IARI personnel engaged in the collecting project; (2) the suggestion arising within ICAR/IARI that administrative constraints in their respective organizations justify CIMMYT, with GOI agreement, having an agent in India act on behalf of CIMMYT to employ personnel and procure materials and supplies if exigencies of the project indicate this to be helpful.

There was discussion between Swaminathan, Gutierrez and Starnes regarding the possibility that the proposed memorandum of agreement

between CIMMYT and GOI might be executed in sufficient time to accommodate this project activity. The consensus was that it is unlikely, that this can happen as the draft M/A is scheduled for discussion between DG, ICAR and DG, CIMMYT in the course of the projected 20 April CIMMYT Board meeting. The arrangement need be made quickly for the collecting project as personnel must be employed and materials and supplies procured shortly if the collecting work is to be operational during this kharif (summer) season.

CD 6/8/73