

**Message from Dr. Kanayo F. Nwanze, Director General
Africa Rice Center (WARDA) and Chairman, Center Directors Committee
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)
on the Observance of World Food Day**

On behalf of the CGIAR, I congratulate the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for focusing on the theme of “Biodiversity for Food Security” on the occasion of the 2004 World Food Day. Genetic diversity is the very foundation of future agricultural development and food security.

‘Biodiversity for food security’ is at the heart of the activities of the Centers supported by the CGIAR, which have made clear contributions to conserving biodiversity – relating to food crops, livestock, forestry and fishery – and improving food security in the most underprivileged regions of the world.

- CGIAR, holds in public trust for the future, the world’s largest collection of plant genetic resources (over 600,000 accessions of more than 3,000 crop, forage, and pasture species). The future of this collection has now been firmly established through the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources.
- More than 300 CGIAR-developed varieties of wheat and rice, and more than 200 varieties of maize, are being grown by farmers in developing countries. Food production has doubled, improving health and nutrition for millions of people.
- New, more environment-friendly technologies developed by the CGIAR have ‘saved’ between 230 and 340 million hectares of land from cultivation worldwide, helping to conserve land and water resources and biodiversity. For example, the development of the New Rice for Africa (NERICA), by unlocking the treasure of genes in the indigenous African rice species, has broadened the genetic base of rice for use world-wide.

As the Green Revolution, spearheaded by the CGIAR has shown, the use of crop diversity to produce more productive and hardy crops undoubtedly remains the best way to guarantee our food security and that of our children. Today, more than ever, the CGIAR is committed to participate in the global effort led by FAO in achieving this goal