

The **GENERATION** Challenge Program



“Cultivating Plant Diversity for
the Resource Poor”

First Annual Research Meeting

Robert S. Zeigler, Program Director

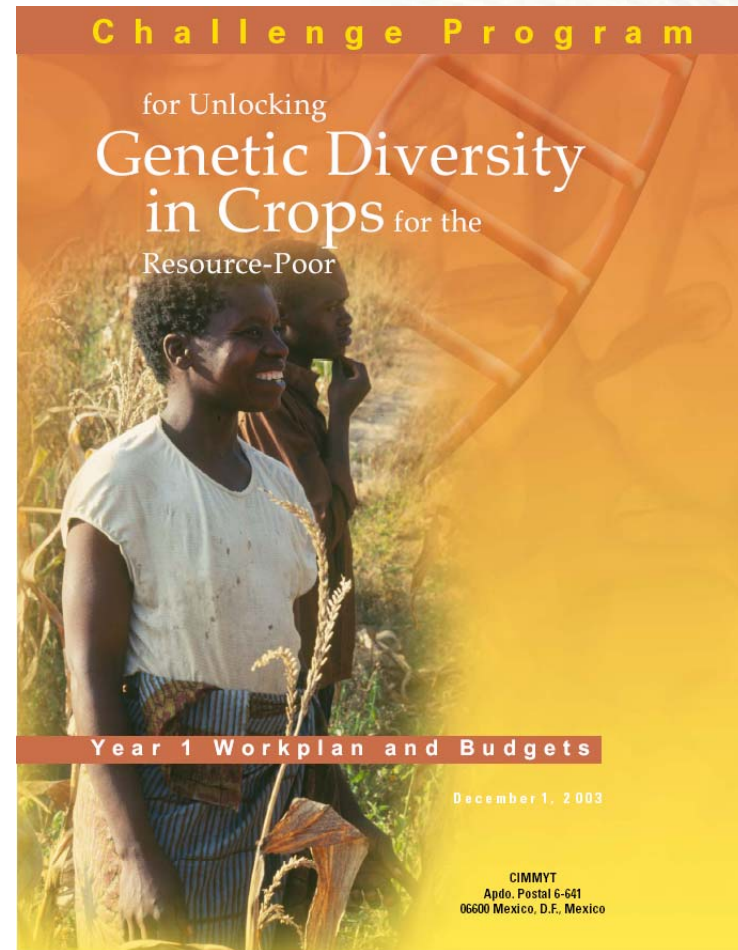
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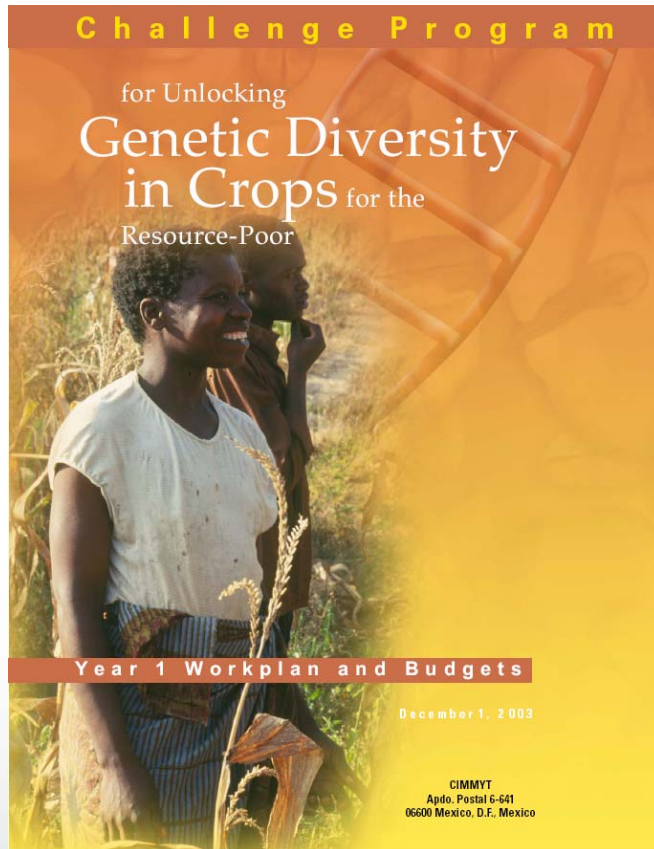
TARGET SCIENCE TO NEED

- Nearly 11 million children die every year in the world from hunger-related causes¹
- Those who survive are frequently physically scarred for life¹
- Poor crop productivity in harsh environments and relatively high food prices are major contributors to food insecurity

¹Source: World Food Programme



TARGET SCIENCE TO NEED



Leverage relatively large investment in crop genomics (>\$120 million invested in US cereals research alone)

Focus the considerable global scientific skills on the serious problems facing developing countries

Capture the imagination of policy makers and legislators with the potential for advanced science to help solve intractable problems that sustain abject poverty



GENERATION Continuum



A seamless chain from
Gene discovery through
Crop varietal development
Capacity building &
Technology delivery with
Global coverage

Some Questions to Ponder:

- Where and how can technology make a difference?
 - History says this is so...but not always
- Is there evidence that our foundation of comparative biology and genomics will work any better than traditional approaches?
 - Evidence from human – mouse genomics and asthma suggests this is so...but for plants?
- Assuming we identify and transfer traits, What means do we have to get these to farmers?
 - History tells us that this can be tricky



Some Milestones



- Designed and are implementing a first year work plan
 - *NOT* a trivial matter
- Undertook a range of activities to standardize our operations at several levels
 - A global public platform is well on its way to becoming a reality
- Three-year Medium Term Plan was developed and has been approved by the Science Council of the CGIAR
- Executive Council of the CGIAR has approved the GCP
 - Reasonably assured funding at ~ \$15M/yr

Some Milestones

- Competitive Grants program underway
 - > 80 Pre-proposals, 25 advanced to full proposal, expect to fund ~ 12
- Commissioned research to receive > \$ 6.5 million per year
 - Based on Medium Term Plan Competitive grants balance
 - Expect to issue first requests in early October

OBJECTIVES OF THIS MEETING



- Communicate and assess progress of the first year
 - Identify bottlenecks and opportunities
 - Will help guide call for commissioned research
- Examine some critical issues related to our potential for impact
 - How do we move from gene to trait to variety?
 - How do we make sure that our target populations are reached by and benefit from our products?

A Few Words On The Agenda...

