

# **Script for Conference summary, vision for the future and close.**

**Friday 1630-1700**

## ***Slide 1***

### **Together we can make change happen!**

Good afternoon excellencies, guests, ladies and gentlemen. It is with pleasure that I welcome you all to this closing session of CABI's 20th Review Conference, but it is also with regret since it brings to an end two very productive and enjoyable days of working together.

## ***Slide 2***

I have never thought of a strategy as an academic, theoretical exercise, but rather as setting a course, a direction, for meaningful action.

On Thursday I spoke to you about the progress we have made since the last Review Conference. And we have fulfilled many of the promises of the last Medium Term Strategy, and in some cases we have achieved even more than we were hoping for. But I am determined that you shouldn't leave this building thinking about the past. I do not want us to

spend time looking in the rear-view mirror when we should be scanning the road ahead.

So, after these stimulating two days, what is the direction we are taking?

### ***Slide 3***

Together – you, our member countries, have worked in partnership to agree a strategy for 2020-2022. It really is OUR collective strategy. We own it and will work together to deliver it.

This collaborative process has taken place over the three Regional Consultations and, now, over the past two days at this Review Conference.

Let's briefly remind ourselves the steps forward we have taken over the past two days.

### ***Slide 4***

Firstly, I thank Her Excellency Josefa Sacko for setting the scene and providing such a fascinating overview of the global challenges we face and how we can work together to overcome them.

### ***Slide 5***

And then we looked at the Member Country priorities we must respond to. We had a lively discussion and the panellists shared outputs from the regional consultations with you, and identified the clear links between the member country priorities – particularly in value chains, climate smart agriculture and management of invasive species - and the global challenges of climate change, gender equality and economic development.

### ***Slide 6***

And you heard from three CABI teams already working to help make a difference in the areas of climate change, gender empowerment and economic development. They demonstrated the experience we have and the future actions required to strengthen our capabilities in these areas and deliver the strategy. I am encouraged by the determination, commitment and expertise demonstrated in those breakout sessions.

### ***Slide 7***

And I was also excited to hear the ways we intend to build upon the huge successes of our Plantwise programme. Our aim is to create a ten-year programme transforming lives – reducing hunger, increasing productivity and resilience, producing more safe food, and a surge of innovative agri-businesses bringing employment to many – especially women and young people.

### ***Slide 8***

Earlier today we discussed the digital technologies we should be engaging with to address the global challenges – and this produced some important insights into the issues that need to be addressed if we are to create a step-change in agricultural production - while using these tools efficiently and equitably. It was great to have this conversation with a group from such diverse fields, which brought many new perspectives, from earth observation to managing risk through data.

## ***Slide 9***

We also explored with a panel of member countries, development partners and private sector partners how we can – and indeed **MUST** - work collaboratively to drive change effectively and efficiently.

One important insight from this session stemmed from the shared view that these partnerships can't be empty expressions of co-operation, but they must generate action. And we need to work together to make this happen. Together we must make connections, encouraging donor desks in your countries to fund the projects we have agreed are essential to global progress. Together we should be forging links between private and public sector organizations, building networks with local CABI staff.

Please speak to me, or anyone from CABI about how you think you can help.

## ***Slide 10***

You have asked us to focus our efforts into these six thematic areas which you have identified as CABI's strengths. Crop health; value chains and trade; invasive species management; development, communication

and extension; digital development; science publishing and journalism.  
And we have therefore framed our strategy around the core strengths.

### ***Slide 11***

But when we are successful - what difference will that make?

### ***Slide 12***

If we achieve the goals we have set ourselves in this strategy we will have improved access to inputs and output markets for millions of farmers creating strong, innovative agri-enterprises. And these will include more women and young people who will have better skills in agriculture and business. And more small holders will be complying with market regulations and meeting customer demands.

### ***Slide 13***

And the world's food and nutrition will be more secure and resilient in the face of climate impacts because of the improved food systems, more best practice information and better evidence-based climate responsive interventions provided by CABI and our partners.

### ***Slide 14***

And women, young people and marginalized groups will have new opportunities. Agricultural entrepreneurs will be supported by services and tailored technical information, and there will much more non-farm rural employment.

### ***Slide 15***

Everyone will benefit from better biodiversity as well as strong AND productive ecosystems – better cushioned from climate change impacts and the threat of invasive species.

### ***Slide 16***

And if we achieve all this, not only will CABI, your organization, have moved closer to OUR VISION to be the number one “go to place” for insightful and practical science-based knowledge about agriculture and the environment...

... but, more importantly the lives of people in all the countries represented here today will be transformed – so no woman, no young

person, no community goes hungry, through lack of knowledge and access to the information they need, when they need it.

I have a real confidence, which has grown over these past two days of collaboration, in what we can achieve together. But we can only do this with your support – financial, operational and strategic.

I would now like to share a video which acknowledges the challenges we face, identifies successes we've had and how much more we can do when we work in partnership.

### ***Slide 17 – video***

### ***Slide 18***

Before we have our final celebration, can I remind you that next year CABI is hosting a major conference, in collaboration with Netherlands ministry of agriculture, Wageningen University and Koppert Biological systems.

Taking place 9-11 September 2020 in The Hague, Netherlands and linked to the UN's International Year of Plant Health 2020 (IYPH)



Aiming to bring together all plant health stakeholders (public, private, civil society and research). Please attend if you can and invite others. There is a flyer outside, do pick one up as you leave.

### ***Slide 19***

So, with that, I would like to thank everybody who has contributed to the success of this event and particularly the Liaison Officers from our Member Countries who have given up significant time and travelled long distances to be with us. I wish you all a safe onward journey – be that long or short.

It now time for me to say goodbye - not just for the end of this meeting but for my time as CEO of CABI. After 14 years of leading this wonderful organization I have agreed with the Board that I will retire at the end of 2020 and therefore this will be my last ever Review Conference and the last chance I will have to meet with many of our Member Country representatives. It has been a great pleasure and privilege to be part of the transformation of CABI and to have helped make a positive difference to so many lives worldwide through the work that we do.

Although the organization still faces challenging times I am confident that it is much more robust and more focused on working in partnership

with national organisations to deliver the priorities of Member Countries than when I arrived. I have been lucky to have a strong management team that has helped deliver change and the support of an experienced and diverse Board that has guided those changes over the years. But above all, this journey has been possible through the commitment and engagement of our donors and our Member Countries in standing alongside CABI to help deliver food security and protect biodiversity around the planet. I thank you all for that and will miss the scope and variety of the interactions, hospitality and friendly welcomes that I have experienced through all my time in this job. CABI has been around for over a century and I am confident that it will go on to achieve great things after I leave. So I give you all my very best wishes for success as you create a better world together.

I will now hand back to the Exco Chair to share a few closing remarks and declare the close of this 20<sup>th</sup> Review Conference.