

## CGIAR CONSORTIUM BOARD CHAIR IN BANGLADESH



Over an extended weekend in November the CGIAR Consortium Board Chair, Carlos Perez del Castillo, paid a visit to Khulna, a small rural village 333 km southwest of Dhaka. Here, in this heavily populated, open landscape of paddy fields and fish ponds, he was made familiar with exciting new developments in agriculture and aquaculture. Hosted by WorldFish and its sister CG organizations [IRRI](#) and [CIMMYT](#), with support from national agricultural research systems, NGOs, and funding bodies (see below), Carlos got his hands wet and his feet muddy with the CGIAR's target audience – farmers in their fields.

“I was impressed by some of the aquatic agricultural mixed production systems of rice, fish, shrimps, prawns and vegetables, and the significant impact that they have on farmers' incomes, food security and poverty alleviation.” the Board Chair said. “It has always been my opinion that if you want to fulfil the CGIAR vision it is not enough to lift farmers' incomes from \$1-a-day to \$2 or even \$3-a-day. They will continue to be poor. What I saw in Bangladesh, with these mixed farming production systems, is an attempt to give farmers the tools, knowledge and opportunities to increase their traditionally meagre incomes to levels where they can think of a better future for themselves and their families, to move from subsistence agriculture to a more market-oriented model.”

Meetings organized by World Fish scientists and staff and other CGIAR Centers, provided an opportunity to learn first-hand about the importance of cultivating small fish as a source of vital nutrients in the diet of women and children, and its social and cultural impact in farming communities; a classic example of CGIAR research for development.

Discussions with the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council were particularly rewarding, emphasising the high value assigned to the CGIAR as well as their expectations with regards to the future. The need to strengthen capacity building activities was stressed on many occasions and some ideas of specific areas where this assistance is most needed were suggested. Dialogue with international NGOs and donors provided context and exposed some of the challenges and opportunities that the country faces.

Carlos Perez del Castillo has expressed his warm appreciation to all those involved in the organization of his visit and particularly acknowledged the government of Bangladesh, Dr. Wais Kabir – Executive Chairman [Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council](#) (BARC), all the scientists from the CGIAR research centres for their outstanding work, the local NGOs and the donor organizations who invest in the research and development programs in Bangladesh.

### NGOs:

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)  
Care, Bangladesh  
Save the Children, USA  
World Vision, Bangladesh

### Funding bodies:

Asian Development Bank (ADB)  
Australian High Commission  
Department for International Development (DFID), Bangladesh  
European Commission Delegation to Bangladesh (EC)  
Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)  
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)  
World Bank