I am delighted that Gordon Conway has decided to present to a wide audience the case for a new and ‘doubly green’ revolution which he initially presented to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

The original ‘green revolution’ was a splendid achievement. The use by farmers of new, research-based technologies transformed agriculture and created food abundance, primarily in Asia and Latin America. Millions were fed and the very real threat of famine was thwarted. Despite these achievements, the food-security agenda has not yet been completed.

A second and more widespread transformation of agriculture is required to combat the nexus of problems associated with poverty, hunger and environmental degradation. To cope with this reality, the CGIAR launched an eighteen-month renewal programme (May 1994/October 1995) to clarify its visions, refocus its research agenda, improve its governance and operations, and secure stable financial support for its mission. As part of this effort, the CGIAR invited a small international team led by Gordon Conway to propose a new vision for the CGIAR. Their report, entitled Sustainable Agriculture for a Food Secure World, emphasized the need for agricultural transformation to be ‘doubly green’ – with equal importance for productivity and natural resource management – and for the knowledge of farming communities to be respected when research agendas are defined and implemented. Gordon Conway was among the first to argue that the new goals could not be met without a genuine partnership among all components of the global agricultural research system. A Global Forum held under CGIAR auspices last year was a catalyst for this new partnership mode, and a step towards enhanced cooperation among all sections of the agricultural community.

The Conway Report, as it is widely known, was endorsed at a CGIAR ministerial-level meeting held in Lucerne in 1995, and continues to inspire the CGIAR. This book, based on the report, builds on the initial arguments and takes the issues forward to a wider community of readers. Access to
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food is a human right, and food security is the key to a prosperous and stable world. Equally, protecting the natural resources base on which food productivity depends is an obligation of all of us on Planet Earth. I strongly commend this book to all concerned with ensuring that the human family achieves these goals.

Ismail Serageldin
Chair, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)
and Vice-President, Environmentally Sustainable Development, World Bank