China is the largest wheat producer and consumer in the world, and more than 120 million tons of wheat is harvested each year. China has worked closely with CIMMYT since early 1970s, and more than 20 research institutes have been involved in the shuttle breeding program established between Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science (CAAS) and CIMMYT over the last 30 years. This joint program mainly focuses on germplasm exchange and training of Chinese scientists. Agricultural outputs increased by 10.7 million tons of grain — worth $3.4 billion, only due to the free use of CIMMYT improved wheat lines, based on the report from Chinese Academy of Sciences in 2015.

Chinese wheat breeders have succeeded in incorporating desirable traits such as disease resistance, high yielding potential, and improved quality from CIMMYT germplasm into their own varieties. Over 260 wheat varieties have been released from crossing Chinese wheat with CIMMYT germplasm. Overall CIMMYT materials are found in more than 26% of all major wheat varieties in China. At present, majority of Chinese varieties are semi-dwarf varieties and benefit from investments in irrigation, agricultural research and extension. Wheat production nearly doubled between 1980 and 2014 although wheat area has reduced by more than 20%.

Due to climate change and shortages of water and other resources, farmers need varieties resilient to drought and capable of making more effective use of fertilizer and water and with greater resistance to diseases, which are continuously evolving. Global research partnerships like the one China with the CIMMYT wheat program have a vital role to play.

Sincerely yours

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