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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda

INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Ninth Session

Rome, 25–27 July 2018

**REVIEW OF THE *DRAFT EXPLORATORY FACT-FINDING SCOPING
STUDY ON “DIGITAL SEQUENCE INFORMATION” ON GENETIC
RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE***

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INTRODCUTION

1. The Commission, at its last session, established a new work stream on “digital sequence information.”¹ It requested the Secretariat to prepare, subject to the availability of the necessary resources, an exploratory fact-finding scoping study on “digital sequence information” on genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA) to provide information on, *inter alia*, terminology used in this area, actors involved with “digital sequence information” on GRFA, the types and extent of uses of “digital sequence information” on GRFA, such as:

- characterization,
- breeding and genetic improvement,
- conservation, and
- identification of GRFA

as well as on relevance of “digital sequence information” on GRFA for food security and nutrition, in order to facilitate consideration by the Commission, at its next session, of the implications of the use of “digital sequence information” on GRFA for the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA, including exchange, access and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use.²

2. The Commission requested its intergovernmental technical Working Groups to review and provide inputs to the draft exploratory fact-finding scoping study prior to its submission to the Commission, for consideration at its next session.³

3. The draft *Exploratory fact-finding scoping study on “digital sequence information” on genetic resources for food and agriculture* is contained in document CGRFA/WG-PGR-9/18/Inf.14. The draft exploratory fact-finding scoping study been prepared by Jack A. Heinemann and Dorien S. Coray (School of Biological Sciences, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand) and by David S. Thaler, Biozentrum, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland. The content of the draft study is entirely the responsibility of the authors, and does not necessarily represent the views of FAO or its Members.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT

4. The Working Group is invited to review and provide inputs to the draft exploratory fact-finding scoping study.

¹ The term is taken from decision CBD COP XIII/16 and is subject to further discussion. There is a recognition that there are a multiplicity of terms that have been used in this area (including, *inter alia*, “genetic sequence data”, “genetic sequence information”, “genetic information”, “dematerialized genetic resources”, “in silico utilization”, etc.) and that further consideration is needed regarding the appropriate term or terms to be used.

² CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 86.

³ CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 90.