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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Item 5.1 of the Provisional Agenda

Thirteenth Regular Session

Rome, 15 – 19 April 2013

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON AQUATIC GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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Appendix: Draft Statutes of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Commission), at its Eleventh Regular Session, recognized the importance and vulnerability of aquatic genetic resources, their roles in an ecosystem approach for food and agriculture, and their contributions to meeting the challenges presented by climate change. It agreed that the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) should cover aquatic genetic resources for the development of sustainable and responsible fisheries and aquaculture and foresee the preparation of *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources*.

2. At its Twenty-seventh Session, the FAO Committee on Fisheries, which had already been informed of the proposal to include aquatic genetic resources within the MYPOW, welcomed “the proposed work for genetic resource management in fisheries and aquaculture”¹ and expressed “its pleasure that the *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries* would serve as a guide for this work.”² The Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, at its fifth session, requested that FAO continue and be proactive in the work with the Commission towards the preparation of *The State of the World on Aquatic Genetic Resources*, subject to the availability of financial resources.³

3. At this Session, the Commission will review a scoping policy analysis related to aquatic genetic resources as well as the status of preparation of the *The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources* (Report). Given the status of preparation of the Report, the Commission may wish to consider the establishment of an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (WG-AqGR), with a view to prepare and complete the report.

4. This document briefly introduces the statutory role, function and *modus operandi* of intergovernmental technical working groups of the Commission, and explains the procedure through which a new working group may be established. The document also reports on the future establishment of a new FAO Advisory Working Group on Genetic Resources and Technologies in the area of fisheries and aquaculture. Finally, the document contains a report by the Director-General on the programme, financial and administrative implications of establishing an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

II. THE ROLE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS

5. At its Twenty-eighth Session in October 1995, the FAO Conference broadened the mandate of the Commission to cover all aspects of genetic resources with relevance to food and agriculture. The Conference further agreed that the Commission should be assisted by geographically-balanced sectoral working groups of an intergovernmental technical nature.⁴

6. Paragraph 3 of the Statutes of the Commission provides:⁵

- (i) The Commission may establish intergovernmental technical working groups (“Sectoral Working Groups”), with appropriate geographical balance, to assist it in areas of plant, animal, forestry and fisheries genetic resources.
- (ii) The purpose of the Sectoral Working Groups shall be to review the situation and issues related to agrobiodiversity in the areas under their respective competences, to advise and make recommendations to the Commission on these matters and to

¹ FIEL/R380, paragraph 51.

² FIEL/R380, paragraph 19.

³ FIRA/R950, paragraph 28.

⁴ C 1995/ REP, paragraphs 65-68.

⁵ CGRFA-12/09/Inf.2.

consider the progress made in implementing the Commission's programme of work, as well as any other matters referred to them by the Commission.

- (iii) The composition and terms of reference for each Sectoral Working Group shall be established by the Commission.

7. Under paragraph 6 of the Commission's Statutes, the establishment of any Sectoral Working Group or other Subsidiary Body shall be subject to the determination by the Director-General that the necessary funds are available in the relevant chapter of the budget of the Organization or from extra-budgetary sources. Before taking any decision involving expenditures in connection with the establishment of Subsidiary Bodies, the Commission shall have before it a report from the Director-General on the programme, administrative and financial implications thereof.

III. EXISTING INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS

8. At its Seventh Regular Session, in January 1997, the Commission established an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (WG-PGR) and an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (WG-AnGR).⁶ At its Twelfth Regular Session, in October 2009, the Commission established the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources (WG-FGR) which held its first session in April 2011.

9. The purpose of the Commission's intergovernmental technical working groups is to review policy and technical issues related to their respective areas of competence, to advise and make recommendations to the Commission on these matters, and to consider the progress made in implementing the Commission's programme of work, as well as any other matters referred to them by the Commission.

10. The Commission's Working Groups have made major contributions to the work of the Commission. The WG-PGR contributed to the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* and the development of *The Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. The Working Group further provided guidance on capacity building activities of FAO regarding the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and on other issues, such as the plant genetic resource networks and the *Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer*.

11. The WG-AnGR guided and contributed to the development of *The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* and the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*. The WG-AnGR also advised the Commission on activities and programmes developed for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources* and, most recently, reviewed a draft funding strategy and draft technical guidelines prepared by FAO for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources*.

12. The WG-FGR guides the preparation of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*. At its first session, the Working Group reviewed the progress in the preparation of the report and stressed the need for a follow-up to its presentation to the Commission. It recommended that the Commission further discuss the possible form and content of a Global Plan of Action once the preparation of the Report is in a more advanced stage.⁷

⁶ CGRFA-7/97/REP, paragraph 10.

⁷ CGRFA-13/11/12, paragraph 29.

13. Currently, all Working Groups are composed of 27 Member Nations, representing all seven FAO regions, which are elected at each Regular Session of the Commission. Working Group sessions are usually also attended by other Members of the Commission, as observers. At this session the Commission will review the composition of its intergovernmental technical working groups.⁸

14. Draft Statutes for an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture are given in the *Appendix* to this document. The draft statutes follow closely the model of the Statutes of the other intergovernmental technical working groups, including with regard to the composition of the Working Group.⁹ It should be noted that, as per the Commission's Statutes, the Secretariat services for the Working Group, if established, would be provided by the respective technical divisions of FAO as part of their annual programmes of work.¹⁰ Furthermore it should be noted that expenses incurred by representatives of members of the Working Group, their alternates and advisers, when attending sessions of the Working Group, as well as the expenses of observers at sessions, shall be borne by the respective governments or organizations.¹¹

IV. FAO ADVISORY WORKING GROUP ON GENETIC RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGIES

15. At the suggestion of its Sub-Committee on Aquaculture¹², FAO's Committee on Fisheries (COFI), at its Thirtieth Session, "supported the establishment of an FAO Advisory Working Group on Genetic Resources and Technologies, that would advise FAO on matters concerning aquatic genetic resources and technologies, to enhance international cooperation on aquatic genetic resource management."¹³ Pending the finalization of Terms of Reference, the Advisory Working Group with experts selected by FAO according to specific technical and scientific needs and qualifications could well complement and support with its expertise and advice the work of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

V. DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT ON THE PROGRAMME, ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF ESTABLISHING AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON AQUATIC GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

16. Individual 3-day meetings of the proposed Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture would incur the following estimated costs:

Direct Costs of the Meeting (interpretation, messengers)	US\$ 35,000
Document preparation	US\$ 30,000
Documentation (translation/printing)	US\$ 50,000
Total	US\$ 115,000

⁸ CGRFA-14/13/1, Agenda item 11.

⁹ For the composition of the Commission's intergovernmental sectoral working groups, *see* CGRFA-14/13/28.

¹⁰ Statutes of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA-14/13/Inf. 2), Article 8ii.

¹¹ Statutes of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA-14/13/Inf. 2), Article 8iii.

¹² FIRA/R1006, paragraph 67.

¹³ FIPI/R1012, p. 7.

17. If it is decided to convene a first session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture between the Fourteenth and the Fifteenth Regular Session of the Commission, the Director-General would need to call for extra-budgetary support, as no provision has been made in the 2014/15 Programme of Work and Budget. Provision will need to be made to support subsequent sessions, either from the Regular Programme Budget or from extra-budgetary resources, or a combination of the two sources. It should be noted, however, that the draft Statutes, as provided in the *Appendix* to this document, do not require regular sessions of the Working Group. As is the case with the Commission's other three working groups, it would be the Commission which, depending on the need, would decide on the timing and duration of the sessions of the Working Group. The composition of the Working Group may be revisited in the light of the Commission's general considerations on the composition of its Working Groups.¹⁴

VI. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

18. The Commission may wish to:

- (i) Decide whether or not it wishes to establish an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- (ii) Review the draft Statutes for an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, as given in the *Appendix* to this document, with a view to adopting them;
- (iii) Decide on the timing and duration of the first session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, subject to the availability of the necessary funds; and
- (iv) Call for adequate regular programme and extra-budgetary support for sessions of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

¹⁴ CGRFA-14/13/28.

APPENDIX**DRAFT STATUTES OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP
ON AQUATIC GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

Article 1 - Terms of Reference

1. The Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Working Group) shall:

- review the situation and issues related to aquatic genetic resources for food and agriculture and advise and make recommendations to the Commission on these matters;
- consider the progress made in implementing the Commission's programme of work on aquatic genetic resources for food and agriculture as well as any other matters referred to the Working Group by the Commission; and
- report to the Commission on its activities.

2. In order for the Working Group to carry out this mandate, the Commission will assign specific tasks to the Working Group.

Article II - Composition

The Working Group shall be composed of twenty-seven Member Nations from the following regions:

- 5 from Africa
- 5 from Europe
- 5 from Asia
- 5 from Latin America and the Caribbean
- 3 from Near East
- 2 from Northern America
- 2 from South West Pacific.

Article III - Election and term of office of Members

The Members of the Working Group shall be elected at each regular session of the Commission and serve until the next regular session of the Commission. They shall be eligible for re-election.

Article IV - Officers

1. The Working Group shall elect its Chairperson and one or more Vice-Chairpersons from among the representatives of Members of the Working Group at the beginning of each session. These officers shall remain in office until the next session of the Working Group and be eligible for re-election.

2. The Chairperson, or a Vice-Chairperson in the absence of a Chairperson, shall preside over the meetings of the Working Group and exercise such other functions as may be required to facilitate its work.

Article V - Sessions

The Commission shall decide on the timing and duration of the sessions of the Working Group, when required. In any case, the Working Group shall hold no more than one regular session annually.

Article VI - Observers

1. Members of the Commission which are not Members of the Working Group may participate, upon request to the Commission Secretariat, in the work of the Working Group in an observer capacity.
2. The Working Group, or the bureau on behalf of the Working Group, may invite experts, as well as representatives of specialized international organizations, to attend its meetings.

Article VII - Application of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

The provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to all matters not specifically dealt with under the present Statutes.