



**REGIONAL MEETING TO PROMOTE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF
PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE IN
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

Gaborone, Botswana

19-22 May, 1998

REPORT

Note

This document includes the main report of the meeting. At present, annexes, appendices and background presentations are not included.

INTRODUCTION

1. The regional meeting to promote implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilisation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in Eastern and Southern Africa was held in Gaborone, Botswana, from 19 to 22 May, 1998. The meeting was convened by FAO, the System Wide Genetic Resources Programme (SGRP), the Southern African Centre for Cooperation and Agricultural Research (SACCAR) and the Association of Agricultural Research in East and Central Africa (ASARECA) and hosted by the Department of Agricultural Research of Botswana and organized with the assistance of the Regional Office for Sub-Saharan Africa region of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI/SSA).

2. Participants from each of the following countries attended the meeting: Botswana, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition a number of representatives of regional and international organisation attended the meeting. A list of participants is attached (Appendix 1).

OPENING CEREMONY

3. Mr. L. Gakale, Director of the Agriculture Research and Chair of the Board of SACCAR welcomed the participants to the meeting. Opening remarks were made by David Cooper on behalf of FAO, Jane Toll on behalf of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), John Wasswa on behalf of ASARECA.

4. The Minister of Agriculture Hon. Mr. Ronald Sebege delivered the opening address. He stressed on the importance of the plant genetic resources for food security and highlighted the importance of the meeting and its critical task of promoting implementation of the Global Plan of Action (GPA). He declared the meeting opened.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

5. The following were elected by acclamation:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Chair: | Mr. L. Gakale, assisted by Mr. Louis M. Mazhani (Botswana) |
| Vice Chairs: | Mr. Wilson Marandu (Tanzania), Mr. Michael Teferi (Eritrea) and Mr. Jose Loustau-Lalanne (Seychelles) |
| Rapporteurs: | Mr. John Wasswa (Uganda), Mr. Godfrey Mwila (Zambia) and Mr. M. Ehsan Dulloo (Mauritius) |

6. Mr. Frank Attere, Regional Director for IPGRI/SSA briefed participants on the objective of the meeting and the programme of work was then adopted (Appendix 2). Three main topics, namely National Programmes, Community Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) management and Regional and International collaboration were addressed in workshops. For each, a number of presentations were made. Following this, critical issues were identified and discussed in small working groups, which were then reported back to the Plenary (Annex A). On the basis of this, some project concepts were elaborated (Annex B). These are not to be taken as an exhaustive list. The meeting nominated a drafting committee constituted of the following: Ehsan Dulloo (Mauritius), Andrew Mushita (Zimbabwe), Godfrey Mwila (Zambia), Mr. Wilson Marandu (Tanzania), John Wasswa (Uganda), Charles Nkhoma representative of the SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre (SPGRC), Ms. Paula Bramel-Cox (ICRISAT) and assisted by Mr. David Cooper (FAO) and Dan Kiambi (IPGRI/SSA) to facilitate preparation of the draft report.

7. The workshops were preceded by a background presentations on the GPA and a review of the status of GPA implementation. Additionally briefing sessions on funding and policy issues were held.

BACKGROUND TO THE GPA AND STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION

8. Mr. David Cooper, Officer in charge, International Conference and Programme for Plant Genetic Resources, FAO, outlined the Global Plan of Action for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA which had been adopted at the International Technical Conference Leipzig, June 1996. He emphasised that it was agreed at Leipzig that the implementation of the plan is the responsibility of all stakeholders.

9. Mr. Dan Kiambi, IPGRI/SSA summarised the state of implementation of each of the 20 activities of the GPA in the region based upon the reports provide by countries and noted some of the major bottlenecks.

WORKSHOPS

Workshop 1: Strengthening National Programmes

Chair: Mr. Wilson Marandu
Rapporteur: Mr. John Wasswa

10. Charles Nkhoma described the activities of SPGRC in the implementation of the GPA. He reported an increase in the number of accessions duplicated in the regional genebank, and described surveys undertaken in order to identify sites for on farm management;

11. John Wasswa surveyed the status of national programmes and facilities in Eastern Africa and reported on the recent establishment of the Eastern Africa Plant Genetic Resources Network (EAPGREN) under the auspices of ASARECA.

12. Jan Engels discussed issues and options to strengthen the coordination and structural organization of national programmes. He cited the purpose of national programmes as identified in the Leipzig process: “to contribute to both national development and sustainable agriculture” and identified the core elements required to meet this goal.

13. Godfrey Mwila presented the Zambian case study, describing in particular the integration of PGRFA programmes into broader agricultural programmes such as the agricultural sector investment programme.

14. Abebe Demisse described the activities of the Ethiopian programme concerning implementation of the GPA.

15. Following discussions, four working groups were constituted to examine the following topics:

| Working Group | Topic | Facilitator |
|---------------|--|----------------|
| 1 | Ensuring political commitment for and sustainability of national, programmes | John Wasswa |
| 2 | Process for involving all the stakeholders efficiently | Michael Teferi |
| 3 | Integrating PGRFA planning into the wider contexts of agriculture and biodiversity | Godfey Mwila |
| 4 | Training and capacity building | Ehsan Dulloo |

16. The critical importance of well coordinated national programmes was reaffirmed. Constraints were identified and the following actions to overcome these were identified: building awareness to creating political commitment; providing for the involvement of all stakeholders; training and capacity building (see Annex A/1-1).

17. A project concept concerning awareness was developed (Annex B/1).

18. The following reasons for involving the full range of stakeholders in national programmes and planning processes were identified: to maximise the number of actors in national programmes, to increase sense of ownership, to increase political support through building constituencies and to define better the objectives of national programmes. A number of mechanisms for this purpose were identified: committees, workshops, networks and consultations, as well as other channels such as NGOs and other organizations; local authorities, educational opportunities and the mass media. It was proposed that national programmes should analyse who the stakeholders are and their actual and potential roles (see Annex A/1-2).

19. Ways of integrating PGRFA planning with agriculture and biodiversity were examined. The importance of good coordination between ministries was emphasized. (see Annex A/1-3). A concept for a model project for participatory national planning processes was formulated (Annex B/3)

20. Problem issues and possible solutions for human resources development and infrastructure development were made (see Annex A/1-4), and a project concept developed (Annex B/2).

Workshop 2: Strengthening community PGRFA management

Chair: Mr. Michael Teferi
Rapporteur: Mr. Godfrey Mwila

21. Mr. Teferi introduced the workshop emphasising the major role played by farmers and their communities in the conservation of PGRFA and crop improvement.

22. Andrew Mushita described the activities of farmers and communities in Zimbabwe: evaluation of landraces; seed fairs, and local seed multiplication.

23. Godfrey Mwila described the role of NGOs in supporting supply of germplasm to farmers after drought and local seed multiplication. He also reported on a recent survey of activities of farmers in on farm conservation.

24. Abebe Demisse described the work of the Biodiversity Institute in restoration and enhancement of landraces in Ethiopia.

25. Following discussions, working groups were constituted to examine the following topics:

| Working Group | Topic | Facilitator |
|----------------------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Mechanisms for strengthening PGRFA conservation and use at community level | Andrew Mushita |
| 2 | Role of stakeholders in the strengthening of linkages | Wilson Marandu |
| 3 | Enabling policy environment, incentives, and reconciling conservation versus improved production | Walter Loubser |

26. Various possible mechanisms for strengthening community PGRFA management were identified including seed fairs, field days and farmer field schools, community seed banks, local seed multiplication and participatory plant breeding. It was noted that some are more effective at supporting conservation, while others increased farmers access to genetic material. The limitations of each were identified and possible solutions proposed (see Annex A/2-1). A number of actions were proposed and a project concept developed (Annex B/4).

27. The involvement of farmers and local communities – as direct actors, direct beneficiaries and/or as partners and providers of information - in the various activity areas of the GPA were surveyed. The roles of the various organizations in promoting community PGRFA management (farmers organizations, NGOs, village groups, and the extension and research service, national genebanks, national PGRFA programmes and international organizations) were considered, factors limiting their effectiveness examined and actions to overcome these developed. (see Annex A/2-2).

28. Various proposals for improving the policy environment and reconciling the various objectives were discussed (Annex A/2-3). A project concept to improving the policy and regulatory framework was developed (Annex B/5).

Workshop 3: Strengthening regional and international collaboration, particularly in promoting the use of PGRFA

Chair: Mr. Jose Lalande (Seychelles)
 Rapporteur: Mr. Ehsan Dulloo (Mauritius)

29. Mr. David Cooper of FAO presented the role of FAO in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action: in supporting the Commission on Genetic resources for food and agriculture; in facilitating implementation by all stakeholders; and in implementing specific actions where appropriate. He invited feedback from national programmes on how FAO’s role can be most effective.

30. Ms. Jane Toll, Coordinator for System wide Genetic Resources Programme (SGRP) discussed the development of the CGIAR/s in genetic resources including the network of base collections. She noted that the Programme was being reviewed and invited participants to contribute comments to this review.

31. Ms. Paula Bramwel-Cox of ICRISAT discussed genetic enhancement, crop networks and the role of the international collections. She emphasized that ICRISAT had reviewed its activities in these areas in the light of the GPA. She noted the need to define the roles of the Centres in the crop networks, and the balance between conservation and use; and conservation and research.

32. Following discussions, working groups were constituted to examine the following topics:

| Working Group | Topic | Facilitator |
|----------------------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Restoration and repatriation of germplasm to national and local levels | Andrew Mushita |
| 2 | The role of crop networks, and other networks | Louis M. Mazhani |
| 3 | Partnerships between national programmes, regional and international centres for a rational approach in conserving and maximising the use of germplasm to the benefit of countries | Abebe Demisse |

33. The steps necessary for restoration of germplasm were elaborated (Annex A/3-1) and a project concept developed (Annex B/6).

34. The various roles for crop-specific and other networks were defined, and gaps and weaknesses

identified. It was proposed that Crop networks increase their focus on PGR, undertake joint planning with regional PGR networks, facilitate exchange of genetic material and include training on PGR in their programmes (Annex A/3-2). A project concept to link a crop improvement network with a regional PGR programme was developed (Annex B/7).

35. Constraints to partnerships were identified and possible solutions proposed (Annex A/3-3).

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

36. Following the presentations and working group discussions the following recommendations were agreed upon:

- i) The sustainability of national programmes for co-ordination of PGRFA activities is crucial. To this effect, domestic funding should be increased, national co-ordination committees institutionalised and PGR concerns integrated into economic development plans.
- ii) Co-ordination mechanisms for implementation of PGR activities should be strengthened through the involvement of all stakeholders through participatory planning processes and increased sector co-ordination in relevant ministries.
- iii) Mechanisms should be put in place for supporting countries with weak national programmes particularly through support from the existing networks.
- iv) Awareness of the importance of PGRFA in agricultural and economic development should be created at policy, technical and community levels in order to ensure active involvement of all stakeholders in national programme development.
- v) It was agreed that the capacities of national programmes for the effective conservation and use of PGRFA need to be strengthened particularly the development of human resources and conservation infrastructures.
- vi) Mechanisms should be developed and put in place to strengthen community PGRFA management in order to improve on farm conservation and farmers' access to genetic material.
- vii) A supporting policy and regulatory framework should be developed to promote the conservation and use of PGRFA at the community level.
- viii) Legislation and policy frameworks for PGRFA conservation and use should be harmonised to ensure a common approach in addressing issues on Intellectual Property Rights, access to germplasm and sharing of benefits, while respecting national differences.
- ix) The International Centres, and other partners in Crop Networks should seek to enhance the roles of such networks in PGRFA conservation and sustainable use.

37. From these recommendations, the following concepts were proposed for development into projects (these are detailed in the Annex B):

| Concepts | Level of Implementation |
|--|-------------------------|
| B1. Creation of an Awareness Programme | National (Model) |
| B2. Human Resource Development/Capacity Building Programme | National/Regional |

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| B3. Participatory Planning process for National Programmes | National (Model) |
| B4. Strengthening community PGRFA Management | Regional/Multi-country |
| B5. Traditional Varieties and under-utilised crops promotion programme | Regional |
| B6. Restoration/Repatriation of germplasm at local and national levels | Regional/Multi-country |
| B7. A crop network/regional PGR network synergy: a case study from SMIP/SPGRC | Regional |

38. Participants committed themselves to take steps to follow-up on the recommendations and seek funding for the project concepts. The meeting reconstituted the drafting committee to facilitate this follow-up process.

39. The roles of SPGRC and EAPGREN in the conservation and use of PGRFA in the two sub-regions generally and specifically their role as a platform for the implementation of the GPA were recognized. Thus the meeting invites the networks to consider these recommendations in their planning.