

**FAO International Technical Conference
on Plant Genetic Resources**

**REPORT OF THE SUB-REGIONAL
PREPARATORY MEETING FOR
SOUTH AMERICA**

**Brasilia, Brazil
29 August - 1 September 1995**



**Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations**



Note by FAO

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OPENING AND PROCEDURES

1. The Sub-regional Meeting on Plant Genetic Resources for South America was held in Brasilia, Brazil, 29 August - 1 September, 1995. The following countries participated in the meeting: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela.
2. The opening statements were made by Mr. Alberto Duque Portugal, President of EMBRAPA, on behalf of the hosting country (Brazil), Mr. Jose Esquinas Alcazar on behalf of the FAO, and Mr. Armando Okada on behalf of IPGRI. Mr. Richard W. Fuller, the FAO Representative for Brazil, also formed part of the opening panel.
3. Mr. Alvaro Alencar (Brazil) was elected President and Secretary of the meeting, and as Vice-Presidents, Ms. Luz Amparo Fonseca (Colombia), Mr. Jose Schvartzman (Paraguay), Mr. Gustavo Blanco (Uruguay) and Ms. Maria Luisa Garcia (Venezuela). It was agreed that the Vice-Presidents were to preside over four working groups, serving also as secretary to these groups.
4. The program of the meeting was approved, with some modifications mainly concerning the sequence of the institutional presentations.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

5. Mr. Jose Esquinas Alcazar (Secretary of the FAO intergovernmental Commission on Plant Genetic Resources) and Mr. Jose de Souza Silva (Superior Officer of FAO and Technical Secretary of the meeting) described the specificities of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and pointed out that globalization in agriculture, and the high interdependence of countries in terms of the plant genetic resources used, make cooperation and international negotiation essential in this field.
6. The recommendation of CNUMAD's Agenda 21, also covered by Resolution No. 3 of the FAO Convention for the approval of the Convention on Biological Diversity, was recalled to reinforce the FAO Global System for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources. It was also recalled that a periodic publication on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources and a Global Plan of Action make up two essential elements of the said system, and that first versions of both documents were



being developed using the preparatory process defined by the International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources.

7. It was recalled that the preparatory process is a participatory one, and is directed by the countries themselves. Finally, the aim and structure of the above-mentioned documents was described, as had been approved by the countries of the Sixth Session of the FAO intergovernmental Commission on Plant Genetic Resources in June 1995, and the singular importance of this meeting was emphasized to encourage the countries of the region to influence the content of the Global Plan of Action through their recommendations and proposals.

PRESENTATION OF THE COUNTRY REPORTS

8. The representatives of the participating countries presented in plenary session their respective Country Reports, emphasizing the strengths, needs and proposals for the Global Plan of Action.

9. The Regional Office of the United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO), the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA), the International Center for the Improvement of Corn and Wheat (CIMMYT), the University of Sao Paulo (USP), the Latin American Consortium for Agroecology and Development (CLADES) and the *Asesoría a Proyectos de Tecnología Alternativa* (ASPTA) all presented institutional reports on their perspectives and activities in plant genetic resources.

10. Mr. Armando Okada, Director of the Regional Office of the International Institute of Plant Genetic Resources (IPGRI) for the Americas, presented the draft of the sub-regional synthesis developed from a preliminary version of the Country Reports.

INTRODUCTORY FRAMEWORK

11. The countries of South America participating in the Sub-regional Meeting on Plant Genetic Resources, a preliminary meeting for the International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, dedicated a substantial part of the time to the presentation of their Country Reports and



primarily to the identification of principles, needs, opportunities and gaps which will be considered in the formulation of policies and plans in the scope of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources.

12. As the most important principle, the countries underlined the need for actions developed in future plans of international cooperation to be directed toward strengthening the operational capacity of the national programs of PGR conservation and sustainable use. These plans should favor the transfer of technology, particularly biotechnologies for the conservation and use of PGR, the formation of human resources in developing countries, the attainment of new and additional financial resources for the execution of projects and programs on the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources, the creation of cooperation mechanisms which permit a fair and equitable distribution of the benefits derived from the sustainable use of plant genetic resources, and the study and effectuation of compensation for past, present and future work carried out by farming communities in the conservation of the genetic resources of plant species important to food and agriculture.

13. As primary opportunities, the countries underlined the wealth of biological diversity existing in Latin America, made up of highly diverse organisms, the existence of diversity and domestication centers, rich in endemisms and favorable for the development of a vast genetic variability in native populations of plant species, as well as the presence of international agricultural research centers, international cooperation agencies, and important *ex situ* plant genetic resource conservation units maintained by national programs of the subregion.

14. The established international legal framework was frequently mentioned, especially the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which reiterates the sovereignty of the State over its biological resources. Measures of Agenda 21 were also cited, which establish guidelines for the constitution of plans of action regarding the different aspects of environmental conservation, preferentially in that which concerns the need to carry out activities leading to the sustainable use of biological diversity and of plant genetic resources.

15. The gaps most emphasized by the countries in their presentations note the absence of instruments regulating access to native plant genetic resources or those existing in national collections, as was specified in the Convention on Biological Diversity. Likewise, there exist no national programs or commissions dedicated to the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources, nor a permanent regional forum in the realm of Latin America and the Caribbean for the discussion of policies and strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of existing plant genetic resources. They stressed the lack



of institutional discourse mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of integrated strategies on conservation methods, the lack of political compromise and decision to carry out national priorities related to the management of plant genetic resources, the limitations of the information and documentation systems of the plant genetic resources existing in germplasm collections.

16. The delegations determined the following as principal needs of their countries:

- a) the provision, availability and continuous flow of new and additional financial resources for the implementation of priority actions in the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources;
- b) the survey and inventory of local flora;
- c) the characterization of plant genetic resources existing in germplasm collections;
- d) the regeneration of samples of plant genetic resources kept in *ex situ* collections;
- e) the teaching and training of human resources in the various areas of management of genetic resources;
- f) an increase in international technical and financial cooperation;
- g) valuation of the genetic resources of non-traditional food crops;
- h) the creation of mechanisms for informational exchange;
- i) the establishment of integrated *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation methods;
- j) the creation of public awareness mechanisms on the importance of plant genetic resources;
- k) the formulation of national legislation on genetic resources and follow up harmonization efforts;
- l) the creation of national programs and commissions dedicated to the promotion of conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources.

17. In addition to the points mentioned, specialists present at this meeting stressed the importance of the participation of traditional farming communities in the *in situ* conservation of the plant genetic resources of food crops, and they emphasized the convergent and divergent aspects of strategies, goals, and methods designed for the conservation of diversity and the sustainable management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

18. Likewise, the international agencies and the international centers present stressed the importance of plant genetic resources for the development



of agriculture and for the production of basic foodstuffs, highlighting the need for international cooperation and attention to the priorities established by the countries, based on the forming of strategical alliances, and other forms of negotiation.

19. The principles, the opportunities, the gaps and the needs presented should be considered in the formulation of national, regional, and international plans in order to support and give priority to activities related to the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

SUB-REGIONAL PROPOSALS FOR A GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

20. The countries of the subregion, in conformity with the Agreement on Biological Diversity, Agenda 21, and the Declaration of Rio, and sharing the common concern of humanity for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources, propose, within the context of the World System for the Conservation and Use of Plant Genetic Resources, a first Global Plan of Action based on the recognition and reaffirmation of the principles, objectives, strategies and activities described below, which should form part of the text of the Global Plan of Action.

I. Principles

- i)** The conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources should help to strengthen the economic growth and social development of the countries of the subregion.
- ii)** The sovereign rights of the States over their plant genetic resources and their responsibility to conserve them and use them in a sustainable manner.
- iii)** The value of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and their importance to food security and sustainable development.
- iv)** The interdependency of the countries in terms of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.
- v)** The importance of international and regional cooperation between governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the need for its promotion.



- vi) The need for new and additional financial resources to allow developing countries to conserve and utilize plant genetic resources in a sustainable manner for food and agriculture.
- vii) The access of developing countries in preferential conditions to technologies pertinent to the conservation and use of plant genetic resources.
- viii) Farmers' Rights.
- ix) Intellectual Property Rights.
- x) The fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the utilization of plant genetic resources, of traditional knowledge, and of innovations.

II. Objectives

The Global Plan of Action should be in agreement with the Convention on Biological Diversity, Agenda 21 and the Declaration of Rio. It will have as an objective the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture with the ultimate aim of encouraging development and reducing hunger and poverty in developing countries.

III. Strategies

Strategy should be based on the needs of the country, keeping in mind the following points:

- i) giving priority to and establishing or strengthening national systems for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources, on a national level;
- ii) strengthening of regional coordination;
- iii) strengthening of national capacity;
- iv) access to and exchange of plant genetic resources relevant to the world food matrix;
- v) access to and exchange of available information and technology;
- vi) the decentralization of activities toward countries and users;
- vii) the rationalization of activities to increase efficiency and to reduce redundant efforts;



- viii) the access mechanism to the resources of the Global Plan of Action's financing fund, should encourage the decentralization of the management of the latter, through the formation of regional and sub-regional funds.

IV. Principal Areas of Action

a) Inventory of flora and monitoring of genetic variability

In order to monitor genetic diversity and to assess current levels of genetic erosion, it is necessary to:

- i) give priority to programs and projects which include genetic resources kept in *ex situ* collections of germplasm, genetic reserves, protected areas, traditional farming communities and indigenous populations, in the areas of:
 - * biogeographical relief
 - * documentation
 - * information and warning systems
- ii) intensify survey and collection activities of the genetic resources of endangered species.

b) Conservation

It is necessary to assure the conservation of plant genetic resources by means of *in situ*, *ex situ*, or combined systems, within the framework of a common policy oriented toward the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, especially through the following actions:

- i) guaranteeing the long-term maintenance of existing germplasm collections, emphasizing the need for regeneration and the establishment of duplicate collections;
- ii) establishing or improving conservation programs and installations as part of an integrated strategy of conservation and sustainable use;
- iii) developing and/or improving methodologies for the conservation of *ex situ* plant genetic resources;
- iv) developing conservation models of *in situ* plant genetic resources in protected areas;
- v) promote the conservation of plant genetic resources on the level of local and indigenous communities, developing incentives to assure their continuity over time;



- vi)** promote the conservation of uncultivated plants, especially those related to important food and agricultural crops;
- vii)** promote the conservation of underutilized species of native and hybrid crops.



c) Characterization and evaluation

To promote a wider use of the genetic variability of the plant genetic resources available in collections, it is necessary to develop characterization and evaluation activities such as those described below:

- i)** Strengthen morphoagronomic characterization and evaluation activities for existing collections.
- ii)** Encourage a greater use of modern techniques in physiological, cytogenetic, biochemical and molecular characterization.
- iii)** Develop methodologies and form core collections for more numerous collections of food crop germplasm.

d) Documentation

In order to encourage a wider use of plant genetic resources as well as PGR valuation studies, it is necessary to reinforce documentation and information systems, particularly in the following aspects:

- i)** Reinforcement of national networks.
- ii)** Reinforcement of regional and sub-regional networks.
- iii)** Recuperation of existing information in countries not yet automatized.
- iv)** Reinforcement of taxonomic identifications.
- v)** Recuperation of information on material collected in the region but kept outside of it.
- vi)** Harmonization of descriptives and information systems.

e) Improvement and promotion of sustainable use of genetic variability

It is necessary to promote the breeding and promotion of new species via specific governmental policies, through the following activities:

- i)** enlargement of the genetic base of active collections and of germplasm work;
- ii)** genetic introgression based on secondary and tertiary common properties;
- iii)** development and production of new materials from little diffused and promising species;
- iv)** development and utilization of biotechnologies for the conservation of germplasm;
- v)** preliminary evaluation network and breeding of genetic resources and local varieties;



vi) to favor the rapid interchange of germplasm destined for breeding research, considering quarantine norms and access codes.

f) Integral valuation of plant genetic resources

In order to facilitate international negotiations in the field of plant genetic resources, stimulate the sustainable use of these resources and justify national, regional and international efforts for their conservation, it is proposed to develop methodologies for the integral valuation of biological diversity and of genetic resources kept in *ex situ* germplasm collections and *in situ* conservation areas.

g) Politics, planning and legal framework

I. It is recommended to consider the following components and levels in the structuring and organization of National Systems:

- national commission
- basic services
- cooperational instruments
- legal norms

II. Keeping in mind the great variety of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and the varying interests of the countries in these resources, it is suggested to develop methodologies for establishing priority which consider, among others, these criteria:

- food security
- the potential of wild species
- the comparative advantages represented by local and native varieties and their wild relatives
- uses
- origins
- state of rarity
- state of conservation

III. Develop and harmonize national legislation in the field of plant genetic resources, especially concerned with access to genetic resources, Farmers' Rights, and their relation to the Intellectual Property Rights.

IV. In the regional scope, to develop corresponding policies, plans and legal framework, keeping in mind national policies and norms, and the existing regional and global positions on the topic.



V. Proposal for Programs and Financing Priorities for the Subregion in the Management Areas of Plant Genetic Resources: information, documentation, training, and the conservation and use of plant genetic resources within the framework of the Plan of Action

Area 1: Management of genetic resources

General Objective: to strengthen the planning and decision-making capacity of the countries striving for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources, in order to stimulate their economic growth and social development.

Program 1.1 Creation and/or strengthening of national systems for plant genetic resources.

Program 1.2 Creation of a periodical regional representative forum in the realm of Latin America and the Caribbean, for the discussion of policies and strategies of regional interest.

Program 1.3 Development of a legal framework on Farmers' Rights and modes of access to plant genetic resources, in order to encourage the development and harmonization of related national legislation.

Program 1.4 Evaluation and reduction of risks for regional genetic resources, and the experimentation and release into the environment of genetically modified organisms, with the participation of national, regional and international organizations.

Program 1.5 Evaluation and reduction of risks associated with the loss of genetic variability.

- Study and implementation of warning and action systems for emergency situations having to do with the loss of genetic variability in species of agricultural importance.
- Study the integration of control mechanisms for loss of genetic variability within a legal framework, since no national environmental legislation currently addresses this matter.
- Establish procedures of restoration and introduction of genetic variability, in agreement with specific interests and requirements.

Program 1.6 Integral Valuation of Plant Genetic Resources. Analysis and development of methodologies of integral valuation (which consider social, economic, biological and environmental aspects) of plant genetic resources.



Area 2: Information and documentation

Objective: to establish and develop information systems which enable a flow of knowledge and feedback of processes associated with the conservation and sustainable use of regional plant genetic resources.

Program 2.1 Create a regional information network on plant genetic resources, based on existing networks (TROIPIGEN, REDARFIT, SIRGSUR, REDBIO).

Program 2.2 Create standardized sub-regional documentation and information systems. Harmonization of descriptors.

Area 3: Training

Objective: to increase and strengthen the region's critical mass of human resources in order to attain higher quality and efficiency in the sustainable management of plant genetic resources.

Program 3.1 Postgraduate course for masters and/or doctorate degrees:

- a. Grant fund
- b. Reinforcement of existing courses in the region
- c. Modular courses on a regional level
- d. Development of postgraduate courses in countries without such programs

Program 3.2 Short courses:

- a. Support for existing courses
- b. Short course with itinerant training

Program 3.3 Interdisciplinary training workshops

- a. Workshops on legislation in plant genetic resources

Program 3.4 Internships bringing up to date and developing knowledge on specific subjects.

Area 4: Conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources

Program 4.1 Survey and Collection of Plant Genetic Resources of Sub-regional Interest

Objective: Determine and expand the variability of the collections.

Sub-program 4.1.1 Inventory of flora

Objective: To determine the diversity and geographic distribution for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources.



Criteria:

- Species important to food security.
- Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent an significant comparative advantage for the countries of the region.
- Uncultivated species with alimentary or agricultural potential.

Sub-program 4.1.2 Biological Studies

Objective: To obtain basic biological information in order to define strategies of collection, conservation and use.

Criteria:

- Species important to food security.
- Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent an significant comparative advantage for the countries of the region.
- Uncultivated species with alimentary or agricultural potential.

Program 4.2 Characterization and Evaluation

Complete the characterization and evaluation of current collection (morphoagronomic, physiological, cytogenetic, biochemical and molecular).

Objective: To be familiar with the variability existing within the collections in order to facilitate their use and promote effective conservation.

Criteria:

- Species important to food security.
- Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent an significant comparative advantage for the countries of the region.
- Uncultivated species with alimentary or agricultural potential.

Program 4.3 *Ex situ* conservation

Objective: To establish and strengthen base and active genebanks in order to conserve variability for present and future use.



Sub-program 4.3.1 Strengthening of National Genebanks and designation of Regional Genebanks.

Criteria:

- Security
- Economy
- Capacity
- Infrastructure.

Sub-program 4.3.2 Routine Activities

Objective: Technical, economic and operative reinforcement.

Subprogram 4.3.3 Research Activities

Activity 4.3.3.1 Monitoring and regeneration of existing collections.

Criteria:

- Species important to food security
- Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent a significant, comparative advantage for the countries of the region.
- Uncultivated species with alimentary or agricultural potential.

Activity 4.3.3.2 Biological study of seeds and development of techniques for their conservation.

Criteria:

- Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent a significant, comparative advantage for the countries of the region.
- Uncultivated species with alimentary or agricultural potential.
- Species important to food security.

Activity 4.3.3.3 Development of germplasm conservation technologies through innovative methods.

Criteria:



- Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent a significant, comparative advantage for the countries of the region.
- Uncultivated species with alimentary or agricultural potential.
- Species important to food security.

Program 4.4 *In situ* conservation

Objective: Maintain diversity and variability, allowing the evolutionary process to continue.

Priorities:

- Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent a significant, comparative advantage for the countries of the region.
- Uncultivated species with alimentary or agricultural potential.

Activity 4.4.1 Establishment of *in situ* conservation models in the different categories of protected area, and establishment of the *in situ* sub-regional Conservation Network.

Activity 4.4.2 *In situ* conservation integrated to the maintainable agricultural exploitation (recomposition of genetic variability), and establishment of *in situ* conservation by the farmer on the level of peasant communities.

Activity 4.4.3 Recuperation of knowledge associated with the conservation and use of the plant genetic resources attained by local bodies.

Program 4.5 Domestication, Breeding and Promotion of Species

Objective: To promote a better supply of plant genetic resources and stimulate its use.

Sub-program 4.5.1 Introduction of desirable characteristics in germplasm, definition of heterotic groups and genetic introgression from secondary and tertiary common properties.



Priorities:

- Species important to food security.
- Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent a significant, comparative advantage for the countries of the region.
- Uncultivated species with alimentary or agricultural potential.

Sub-program 4.5.2 Enrichment of the genetic bases of crops of current alimentary importance.

Priorities:

- Species important for food security.
- Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent a significant, comparative advantage for the countries of the region.

Sub-program 4.5.3 Development and production of little diffused, promising species.

Priorities:

- Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent a significant, comparative advantage for the countries of the region.
- Uncultivated species with alimentary or agricultural potential.

Program 4.6 Production and Distribution of Seeds of Local Varieties

Objective: To promote the availability of good quality seeds of local varieties.

Activity 4.6.1 The design of seed production and distribution strategies for small producers (local varieties), using systems of craftsmanship or small enterprise.

Activity 4.6.2 Establishment of an Evaluation Network of local varieties.

Priorities:

Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent a significant comparative advantage for the countries of the region.



Program 4.7 Biotechnology as a Tool for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources.

Objective: To possess new biotechnological tools for activities related to plant genetic resources and the monitoring of environmental impact.

Activity 4.7.1 Development and utilization of biotechnological procedures for the conservation of germplasm.

Priorities:

- Species important to food security.
- Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent an significant comparative advantage for the countries of the region.
- Uncultivated species with nutritional or agricultural potential.

Activity 4.7.2 Development of techniques for monitoring the environmental impact of transgenic plants.

Activity 4.7.3 Use of molecular markers for characterization and breeding.

Priorities:

- Species important to food security.
- Local and native varieties, and wild relatives of important crops which could represent an significant comparative advantage for the countries of the region.
- Uncultivated species with alimentary or agricultural potential.

Program 4.8 Formation of Sub-regional Committees to Support the Activities of Plant Genetic Resources

Objective: To strengthen the sub-regional capacity and promote the standardization of methodologies applied to plant genetic resources.

Possible committees:

- Population genetics
- Sampling
- Characterization
- Documentation and Information



- *In situ* conservation
- *Ex situ* conservation
- Biotechnological techniques
- Core collection
- Biosecurity

CLOSING

21. The countries welcomed EMBRAPA's offer to host a small meeting at the beginning of October to prepare a sub-regional contribution to the formulation of the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources report. The hosting country will finance the participation of the four vice presidents (Colombia, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela) and a delegate from Ecuador in representation of the Andean subregion. It was agreed that other countries of the region could also participate in the meeting, but that they must cover the expenses of this participation. It was requested that the Secretariat send brief guidelines to all participating countries to facilitate the preparation of the national summaries which the countries will send to EMBRAPA before the meeting in October.

22. The participating countries were in agreement as to the importance of the regional meeting in Colombia, foreseen for March of 1996. They thought that such a meeting should try to define a common position for Latin America and the Caribbean, with respect to the first State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources and the Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources, in view of the Second Extra-ordinary Meeting of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources in April of 1996 as well as the International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources. It was also suggested that the meeting be used to discuss points related to plant genetic resources, the effectuation of the Farmers' Rights, and other aspects linked to the on-going negotiations at FAO for the Revision of the International Undertaking. The national and regional experiences of participating countries would be considered during the meeting.

23. The event came to an end with the intervention of Mr. Richard W. Fuller, FAO Representative in Brazil.



APPENDIX 1 PROPOSAL FOR NATIONAL SYSTEMS OF CONSERVATION AND USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

1. Reinforcement of the Institutional Capacity on a Regional and National Level for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources of Regional Interest

Structure and organization of the national systems of plant genetic resources

The delegations agreed upon the necessity to develop and/or consolidate National Systems for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources in the countries of the subregion.

The following is proposed as a basic scheme for the National System:

Criteria:

- To structure the system in an economical and efficient manner, including only essential functions to facilitate rapid establishment and acceptance.
- Involve the decision making hierarchy and the political sphere as well as public opinion in general
- That it be situated on a high political level
- Guarantee a financial mechanism for its continuous functioning.

Composition

It should be made up of representatives from the institutions involved in the matter. In order to assure proper representation, consultation mechanisms should be guaranteed to the representatives of the production chain: seed producers, breeders, farmers, etc.

Functions

- Formulation of General Policies on Genetic Resource
- Definition of Strategies
- Identification of Priorities
- Management of financial resources beyond those possessed by executive institutions



National inter-institutional commission

The ultimate decision-making body of the National System with three spheres of activity:

- Basic Services
- Cooperational Instruments
- Legal norms

Basic services

The Commission will be inclined to strengthen those integrating services of the System necessary to assure the conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources:

- Long Term National Base Genebank
- Active Genebanks
- Quarantine System (which would facilitate the interchange of germplasm)
- *In situ* conservation
- National Information Genebank
- Characterization and evaluation programs (to promote the use and valuation of the collections, these programs were considered basic services in order to guarantee their status as permanent activities with fixed funding).

Cooperational instruments

The Commission will facilitate the development of the instruments necessary for the coordination and the cooperation between the different national institutions, the following in particular:

- National Plan of Action for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources
- Periodical Report on the State of Plant Genetic Resources in the country
- Promotion of Networks of researchers and specialists by species or topic

Legal norms

Development and harmonization of national legislation pertinent to plant genetic resources, especially Farmers' Rights and access to the genetic resources



and their relationship to Intellectual Property Rights. This harmonization should be founded on the following principles:

- State sovereignty over plant genetic resources.
- Fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use.

Recommendations

- Support in the creation of National Systems
- Support in the creation or reinforcement of the Base National Genebank
- Reinforcement of the Active Genebanks in the countries.
- To develop National Systems of *in situ* Conservation
- To strengthen characterization and evaluation programs to promote the use of wide genetic variability.
- To strengthen the actions necessary for the completion of periodical reports on the state of plant genetic resources in the countries.
- Support for discussion, negotiation and harmonization of a specific, congruent national legislation in plant genetic resources.
- Encourage the harmonization and development of national legislation within the framework of a regional and sub-regional forum.

2. Prioritization of Promising Crops and Wild Plants for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources

Taking into consideration the diverse interests of the countries of the subregion regarding species and crops, certain criteria are recommended to facilitate the establishment of priorities keeping in mind economic as well as agronomic and biological aspects:

- Species important to food security;
- Uncultivated species with alimentary or agricultural potential;
- Local and native varieties and uncultivated relatives of important crops, which could represent a significant, comparative advantage for the countries of that region

Some criteria to establish priority within these categories:

- Number of uses;
- Origin: endemic, native and naturalized;



- State of rarity: in respect to dispersion, type of habitat, size of population;
- State of conservation: extinct, endangered, vulnerable, out of danger, no information.

Recommendations

Support the creation of workshops on the definition of methodologies that help prioritize plant genetic resources on a national and sub-regional level (Andes, Amazon, Cono Sur).

3. Training for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources

Needs within the different levels of training were defined on a regional level and the countries agreed to encourage the formation of courses in the subregion, giving priority to the use of existing regional technical capacity.

1. Postgraduate course to obtain masters and/or doctorate degrees:
 - a. Grant fund
 - b. Reinforce existing courses in the region
 - c. Modular courses on a regional level.
 - d. Develop postgraduate courses in countries of the region as yet without such programs.
2. Short courses:
 - a. Support for existing courses
 - b. Short course with itinerant training
3. Interdisciplinary training workshops
 - a. Workshops in legislation of plant genetic resources
4. Internships bringing up to date and developing knowledge of specific subjects.

Recommendations

- Creation of a grant fund
- Support for existing regular postgraduate courses in the countries.
- Creation of a regional level postgraduate course structured in modular form which would allow the use of the existing regional capacity by topic



and coordination with universities of the subregion for formal accreditation.

- Financing and development of postgraduate courses in the countries of the region as yet without them.
- Support for short courses and training programs existing in the sub-region and financing and development of an itinerant short course on plant genetic resources.
- Creation of interdisciplinary workshops in matters of legislation related to plant genetic resources.
- Creation of a fund for internships for the updating and development of knowledge.

4. Information, Documentation and Early Warning Systems for Plant Genetic Resources of Regional Interest

Recommendations

- Reinforcement of national networks
- Reinforcement of regional and sub-regional networks
- Recuperation of information existing in countries not yet automatized
- Reinforcement of taxonomic identifications
- Recuperation of information on collections gathered in countries of the subregion but now kept in germplasm genebanks and herbariums of other parts of the world.
- Harmonization of information systems and of the descriptives.
- Support for the development of education and awareness programs, and dissemination-of the importance of the subject on different levels: political, institutional, conservationist farmers, communicators, public opinion in general.