

October 2005



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والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

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Agriculture  
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of  
the  
United  
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pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## Item 5 of the Draft Provisional Agenda

### COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

#### WORKING GROUP ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Third Session

Rome, 26 – 28 October 2005

#### SUMMARY REPORT OF A WORKSHOP FOR COUNTRIES OF NORTH AFRICA AND NILE VALLEY: TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE – CREATING AN “INTERSECTORAL” DIALOGUE ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES CONSERVATION, BREEDING AND SEEDS

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is a permanent forum where governments discuss and negotiate matters relevant to genetic resources for food and agriculture. Its main objectives are to ensure the conservation and sustainable utilization of genetic resources for food and agriculture, as well the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use, for present and future generations. During its Tenth Regular Session<sup>1</sup>, the Commission called for regional meetings in support of certain elements of its work programme relating to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), in particular supporting components of the *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

2. FAO and the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) organized a workshop in Cairo, Egypt on 19-21 June 2005 on Technical Support to the International Treaty for Creating an “Intersectoral” Dialogue on Plant Genetic Resources Conservation, Breeding and Seeds. The agenda is presented in Appendix A below. The Workshop was placed under the patronage of H. E. the Minister of Agriculture Mr. Ahmed El-Leithy. It was attended by 35 senior seed and plant genetic resources officials representing 8 countries of the Nile Valley and North Africa (Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan and Tunisia). One representative for plant genetic resources and one representative for seeds from each country were invited to participate, as well as relevant international organisations. The list of participants is presented in Appendix B. The Workshop was funded by the Government of Norway and by FAO.

3. Dr. Mohamed Khalifa, Director General of National Gene Bank, on behalf of H.E. the Minister of Agriculture, welcomed the participants and thanked ICARDA and FAO for choosing Egypt to hold this Workshop. Dr. Magdy Madkour, Assistant Director General for International Cooperation at ICARDA, stressed the importance of the initiatives to be addressed by the Workshop and expressed the readiness of ICARDA to join efforts with FAO and other organizations in helping countries in Nile Valley and North Africa in the development and implementation of initiatives related to PGRFA conservation and sustainable use. Mr. Abdellatif Thabet, the FAO representative in Egypt, welcomed the participants on behalf of FAO. He emphasized the interdisciplinary nature of PGRFA and recalled the activities decided by the Member States of the FAO Commission.

4. FAO presented a global overview of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the objectives of the workshop, which were: to create an intersectoral dialogue on PGRFA conservation, breeding and seeds in the region’s countries and sub-regions; to present revised Indicators and the Reporting Format for Monitoring Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of PGRFA and the computerized tools developed to assist countries in carrying out such monitoring; and to discuss Guidelines for the development of Country Reports as a contribution to preparation of the second Report on the State of the World's PGRFA.

5. Dr. George Ayad (IPGRI) presented information on the status of PGRFA in the Region, Dr. Zewdie Bishaw (ICARDA) presented integrating plant genetic resources conservation, plant breeding and seed systems, and Dr. Brad Fraleigh (FAO) presented the main features of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, Tenth Regular Session Rome, 8 - 12 November 2004, document CGRFA-10/04/REP

## **2. MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF PGRFA**

6. FAO presented the *Global Plan of Action* and how its implementation can be monitored. The first *Global Plan of Action* was developed under the guidance of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, through a country-driven preparatory process. It was adopted in 1996 by 150 countries at the Fourth International Technical Conference. The *Global Plan of Action* comprises twenty priority activity areas, covering *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, plant genetic resources utilization (especially in plant breeding and seed systems), and institutions and capacity-building. The International Technical Conference agreed that governments would monitor and guide overall progress, through the Commission on Genetic Resources. The *Global Plan of Action* is now also a supporting component of the *International Treaty*.

7. During its Tenth Regular Session in November 2004, the Commission recognized the importance of an efficient system for monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, in terms of planning, setting priorities, and achieving the mobilisation of financial resources to support national plant genetic resource programmes. The Commission adopted indicators and a reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, as part of a new monitoring approach culminating in the establishment of national information-sharing mechanisms. It supported the application of the new monitoring approach to all countries, in view of the integration of these monitoring activities with the preparation of the second *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

8. FAO presented the new approach for monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, as well as the tools developed to assist countries to apply the new monitoring approach, including the indicators and reporting format, the computer application and guidelines for managing a country-led participatory process. Participants were also briefed about the results achieved by implementing the new monitoring approach in other regions and were given a demonstration of the resulting web-based national information systems.

## **3. PREPARATION OF THE SECOND REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S PGRFA**

9. FAO presented the *Report on the State of the World's PGRFA* and the process of preparation of Country Reports contributing to the development of the second *Report*. In 1989, the Commission "recommended that the Secretariat should periodically prepare a report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, with the cooperation of other bodies concerned. The report should analyze the current plant genetic resources situation, and describe activities and programmes being carried out by regional, international and non-governmental organizations, with the aim of identifying gaps, constraints and emergency situations; this would allow the Commission to recommend priorities and ways of harmonizing the overall effort". The first *Report* was prepared for the Fourth International Technical Conference, held in 1996, which welcomed it as the first comprehensive worldwide assessment of the status and use of PGRFA. The *Report* is now also a supporting component of the *International Treaty*.

10. At its Tenth Session, the Commission agreed that the second *Report* should provide objective information and analysis, and should identify priorities, as a basis for updating the rolling *Global Plan of Action*. The Commission encouraged Members and other countries and relevant organizations to participate in the preparatory process. It adopted steps for preparing the second *Report*, on the basis that it would be completed in 2008. It confirmed that the preparatory process for the second *Report* should be fully integrated into the process of monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*. The Commission approved a list of thematic background studies for the second *Report*. It called upon donor countries and international organizations to assist, by providing the financial resources required for the full participation of

all countries in the preparation of the second *Report*, including in the monitoring of the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*. The Commission took note of draft Guidelines for Country Reports presented by FAO<sup>2</sup>, and observed that these should be further considered at regional meetings.

11. FAO presented the steps for preparing the second *Report*, including the revised time line. Particular emphasis was placed on the preparation of Country Reports as an essential participative, country-driven foundation for the development of the second *Report*. The Guidelines for the preparation of Country Reports were presented and discussed in detail. Aspects concerning the sustainable use of PGRFA in seed systems were highlighted. The preparation of the Country Reports should benefit greatly from the information obtained during national monitoring of implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, and the Guidelines were written in way to facilitate this synergy.

#### 4. GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST

12. The objectives of the Trust and the steps towards the development of regional and crop conservation strategies were presented to the Workshop. The Global Crop Diversity Trust aims to match the long term nature of conservation needs with long term secure and sustainable funding. At its centre will be an endowment that would provide a permanent source of funding for crop diversity collections around the world. The Trust is an element of the Funding Strategy of the *International Treaty*.

13. The Trust envisages two complementary approaches to identifying and prioritizing eligible PGRFA for upgrading and long-term conservation. One approach is to identify key *ex situ* collections of globally important crops on a region-by-region basis. The other is to prioritize collections for funding on a crop-by-crop basis at the global level. Together, the two approaches will contribute to the establishment of a rational global system for the conservation of important crop diversity. This process will bring together the managers of PGRFA, and other experts, in developed and developing countries to design and implement the most efficient and effective strategies for ensuring the long-term conservation, regeneration, characterization, evaluation, documentation and availability of the crops that are vital to the world's food security. The Workshop discussed the development of a regional strategy for the WANA region.

#### 5. ASSESSING AND STRENGTHENING NATIONAL PLANT BREEDING AND BIOTECHNOLOGY CAPACITY

14. During its Tenth Regular Session, the Commission considered the assessment of national capacities and priorities in plant breeding, and specific training to strengthen such capacity, including the use of appropriate biotechnologies. Several Member countries stated that plant breeding is a major issue for developing countries, and stressed the need to strengthen plant breeding capacity.

15. FAO presented the objectives, methodology and expected results of a survey to assess national capacities and priorities in plant breeding and biotechnology, to increase the sustainable use of PGRFA. This initiative was discussed by the Workshop participants.

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<sup>2</sup> *Draft Country Guidelines for the Second State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Tenth Regular Session, Rome, 8 - 12 November 2004, document CGRFA-10/04/Inf.8

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

16. Countries agreed on the importance of strengthening national programmes in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, and adopted the following recommendations related to the themes discussed during the Workshop.

17. Recommendations on monitoring implementation of the Global Plan of Action on PGRFA:

- a. FAO should take direct action to assist countries to monitor implementation of GPA;
- b. National-level training workshops were found to be useful in other countries and need to be conducted on use of the indicators and reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the GPA and the computer application developed for managing such information. It is important to train stakeholders and assist National Focal Points to manage PGRFA information;
- c. FAO and other organizations (*inter alia* IPGRI and ICARDA) should cooperate with countries to collect available documents and make them available in electronic form, and help countries to build the National Information-Sharing data base at the country level;
- d. All countries monitoring national implementation of the Global Plan of Action are encouraged to work with and assist other countries in their regions. FAO is invited to explore the possibility of finding one or two countries in the region to develop particular expertise to assist other countries in the region to build National Information-Sharing Mechanisms. Countries are invited to express their aspiration to take the lead in implementing such activities.

18. Recommendations on preparing the Report on the State of the World's PGRFA:

- a. Countries are encouraged to prepare Country Reports using the Guidelines developed by FAO and presented in the workshop;
- b. FAO and IPGRI should provide technical assistance for the elaboration of Country Reports according to the availability of funding;
- c. The interaction between plant genetic resources and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture should be incorporated in the Country Reports in North Africa and the Nile Valley, because of the particular importance of rangelands in these countries

19. Recommendation concerning seed systems:

Governments are encouraged to build strong national seed production and distribution programmes, including to establish or strengthen seed producer associations. Seed systems should be given due importance in PGRFA conservation and sustainable use.

20. Recommendations concerning the International Treaty on PGRFA:

- a. FAO should assist countries to create awareness about the Treaty;
- b. Revision of the crop list in Annex I of the Treaty should be carried out regularly;
- c. Countries should decide how to implement Farmers' Rights. Farmers' Rights should be considered when intellectual property rights are applied. FAO should provide legal and technical assistance for the development of national legislation on access and benefit-sharing and Farmers' Rights when requested.

21. Recommendations concerning the Global Crop Diversity Trust:

- a. The Trust is very important to the International Treaty and it should work within the framework of the Treaty;

- b. All North Africa and Nile Valley countries are encouraged to get involved in the development of the regional strategy and relevant crop strategies for the Trust;
  - c. Regional and international organizations should become involved in the implementation of the Trust.
22. Recommendations concerning national capacity in plant breeding and biotechnology:
- a. Countries, assisted by regional and international organizations, should strengthen their national plant breeding and biotechnology capacity in North Africa and the Nile Valley to increase sustainable use of PGRFA;
  - b. FAO should assist countries in their assessment of plant breeding and biotechnology activities. FAO, ICARDA and other regional institutions are encouraged to collaborate with the countries for evaluating the national breeding and biotechnology activities;
  - c. The Plant Breeding Survey assessment is encouraged to give attention to germplasm enhancement activities using PGRFA.
23. Recommendations concerning the countries of North Africa and the Nile Valley:
- a. Regional integration and networking in PGRFA should be enhanced;
  - b. More emphasis is required on implementation of the Global Plan of Action;
  - c. The conservation of PGRFA, plant breeding and seed supply are interdependent and should work in harmony;
  - d. PGRFA policies, legislation and activities need to be harmonized within and among countries;
  - e. Workshop participants recognized that local PGRFA and seed systems are most important for varieties and seed in developing countries;
  - f. It is important to have a transparent and participatory consultative process in developing policies and regulatory frameworks at national, regional and international levels;
  - g. The level of attention and priority given to North Africa and Nile Valley countries for all initiatives discussed in this Workshop should be strengthened;
  - h. Bilateral and multilateral donors are invited to provide financial support for countries to conduct the PGRFA initiatives discussed during the workshop;
  - i. It is important to increase awareness of the value and importance of PGRFA through the public media. Countries should seek to increase the level of coverage of national and international PGRFA activities by local and national media.
24. Participants expressed their appreciation to Egypt for hosting the Workshop, to ICARDA and FAO for organizing it, and to the Government of Norway and FAO for their financial support.

## *APPENDIX A*

### **Technical Support to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) – Creating an “Intersectoral” Dialogue on PGRFA Conservation, Breeding and Seeds for North Africa and the Nile Valley**

*Cairo, Egypt  
19-21 June 2005*

#### Agenda of the Workshop

### **Sunday 19 June**

**08:00-09:00**

**Registration**

**09:00-10:30**

**Opening session**

FAO: Mr. Abdellatif Thabet, FAO Representative for Egypt  
ICARDA: Dr Magdy Madkour, Director - International Cooperation  
Egypt: Dr. Mohamed Khalifa, Director NGB on behalf of  
H.E. The Minister of Agriculture

Global Overview of PGRFA: Dr. Brad Fraleigh, FAO

**10:30-11:00**

**Refreshment Break**

Situation of PGRFA in the Region  
Presentation: Dr. George Ayad, IPGRI  
International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture  
Presentation: Dr. Brad Fraleigh, FAO

**13:00-14:00**

**LUNCH**

Integrating Plant Genetic Resources Conservation, Breeding and Seed  
Presentation: Dr. Zewdie Bishaw, ICARDA  
Survey of National Capacities and Priorities in Plant Breeding, including  
Associated  
Capacities in Biotechnologies  
Presentation: Dr. Elcio Guimaraes, FAO

**15:30-16:00**

**Refreshment Break**

Global Crop Diversity Trust  
Presentation: Dr. George Ayad, IPGRI and Dr. Elcio Guimaraes, FAO

Discussion points:

- eligibility for funding
- development of regional and crop strategies



**Monday 20 June**

**09:00-10:30** Monitoring Implementation of the Global Plan of Action  
Presentation: Dr. Stefano Diulgheroff, FAO (to be continued)

**10:30-11:00 Refreshment Break**

Monitoring Implementation of the Global Plan of Action  
Presentation: Dr. Stefano Diulgheroff, FAO (to be continued)

**13:00-14:00 LUNCH**

Monitoring Implementation of the Global Plan of Action (continued)  
Demonstration of computer application: Dr. Stefano Diulgheroff, FAO

**15:30-16:00 Refreshment Break**

Second Report on the State of the World's PGRFA  
Presentation: Dr. Brad Fraleigh, FAO

**19:30-21:30 Nile cruise Dinner**

**Tuesday 21 June**

**09:00-10:30**

Second Report on the State of the World's PGRFA (continued)

Presentation: Dr. Brad Fraleigh, FAO

Discussion points:

- Guidelines for Country Reports
- process of preparation of Country Reports

**10:30-11:00 Refreshment Break**

Recommendations

Introduction to the National Gene Bank of Egypt

Presentation: Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim El-Hawary, Egypt

Wrap-up and Conclusions

**13:00-14:00 LUNCH**

Visit to the National Gene Bank of Egypt

## APPENDIX B

### Technical Support to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) – Creating an “Intersectoral” Dialogue on PGRFA Conservation, Breeding and Seeds for North Africa and the Nile Valley

*Cairo, Egypt  
19-21 June 2005*

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