



Invitation to the 8th Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group
on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Rome, Italy, 8 – 10 June 2016

Reply requested by 1 April 2016

The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has the honour to announce that the 8th Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group) will be held at FAO headquarters in Rome from 8 to 10 June 2016. The opening will begin at 10.00 hours on Wednesday 8 June 2016.

The Session is being convened under the Regular Programme of the Organization. It will be conducted in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

The Session will be preceded by an informal multi-stakeholder dialogue on *Global networking on in situ conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*. The dialogue will be held in Rome from 6 to 7 June 2016.

The Working Group was established by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture at its 7th Session in May 1997. The Members of the Working Group and their Alternates, as elected by the 15th Session of the Commission in January 2015, are as follows:

Africa: Chad, Eritrea, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal

First Alternate: Malawi

Second Alternate: Ethiopia

Asia: Bhutan, Cambodia, Japan, Mongolia, Philippines

First Alternate: Malaysia

Second Alternate: India

Europe: Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Spain

First Alternate: France

Second Alternate: Switzerland

Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guyana, Jamaica

First Alternate: Costa Rica

Second Alternate: Paraguay

./.

This invitation is sent to addressees of all FAO Members which are members of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, as prescribed in the official channels of communication of FAO, as follows:

For ACTION/INFORMATION, as appropriate:

- Main Addressees (Ministers for Foreign Affairs or Agriculture or other addressees selected by the Government);
- Permanent Representatives to FAO/Embassies.

This invitation is also being sent to heads of selected international organizations.

Near East: Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Yemen
First Alternate: Sudan
Second Alternate: Oman
North America: Canada, United States of America
Southwest Pacific: Cook Islands, Fiji
First Alternate: Samoa
Second Alternate: Tonga

According to the Statutes of the Working Group, Alternates replace, in the order in which they appear on the above list, any Member who has resigned and informed the Secretariat accordingly. Members are requested to confirm to the Secretariat in writing their participation or non-participation in the Working Group meeting. If a Member of the Working Group is not able to attend the meeting, and informs the Secretariat accordingly, the Member shall be replaced in a timely manner by one of the elected Alternates from the same region. Where a Member of the Working Group does not attend the meeting without having informed the Secretariat prior to the meeting, the Working Group, in consultation with the region, may replace this Member, on an *ad hoc* basis, by a Member of the Commission from the same region that is present at the meeting.

Members of the Commission that 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. 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 as observers.

The 15th Regular Session of the Commission decided that the Working Group should meet prior to the next Regular Session of the Commission. The Working Group will review: (i) draft technical guidelines on the management of landraces and crop wild relatives; (ii) progress in the implementation of the *Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/015/i2624e/i2624e00.htm>); and (iii) the preparation of *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. The Commission also requested the Working Group to explore access and benefit-sharing issues for the plant genetic resource subsector, as well as review the Multi-year Programme of Work.

In line with the Organization's objective to minimize the environmental impact of FAO's processes and to contribute to climate neutrality, the 8th Session of the Working Group will be a paper-smart meeting, i.e. the use of paper at all stages of the meeting will be greatly reduced. Participants are requested to bring their own documents to the meetings, as hard copies will not be available. All meeting and background documents, including in-session documents, will be available online at:

<http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/core-themes/theme/seeds-pgr/itwg/8th/en/>

The Director-General would appreciate receiving the names, official titles and addresses of the representatives designated to attend the Session by 1 April 2016 at the latest. Online registration will be available through the password-protected FAO Members Gateway at: <http://www.fao.org/members-gateway/en/>. Please note that online registration requires the uploading of a recent passport-size digital photograph. Representatives from international organizations designated to attend the meeting as observers are requested to forward their names, official titles and addresses by email to: ITWG-PGRFA@fao.org, together with a recent passport-size digital photograph.

Participants requiring visas must obtain these from the Italian Consulate or competent Diplomatic Mission in their country before leaving for Rome. Visa applications must be submitted well in advance of departure, as three weeks or more may be required for an Italian visa to be issued. Exclusively those participants travelling from a country where there is no Italian Consulate or other competent Diplomatic Mission may obtain a visa on arrival in Rome, provided that they advise the Secretariat of the meeting of their full name, date of birth, nationality, passport number, issue and expiry dates, flight number, date and hour of arrival and their full travel itinerary, which must not include any other Schengen country. This information must reach FAO at least three weeks before the arrival of participants to permit FAO to request that a visa be issued at Rome airport. Participants failing to comply with the above will not be allowed to enter Italy by the Italian authorities.