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联合国  
粮食及  
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of  
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l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
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организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

### Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda

## COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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

#### Fourth Session

Rome, 15-17 July 2009

### UPDATING THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE UTILIZATION OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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**UPDATING THE *GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE UTILIZATION OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE***

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), at its Eleventh Regular Session:
  - requested FAO to submit to the Commission's Twelfth Regular Session a proposed plan for the process of updating the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Global Plan of Action)*;<sup>1</sup>
  - requested its Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group) to consider elements of a plan for updating the *Global Plan of Action*;<sup>2</sup>
  - agreed that the updated rolling *Global Plan of Action* would be considered at the Thirteenth Regular Session of the Commission, on the basis of the updated *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*.<sup>3</sup>
2. The current document provides a brief overview of the rolling *Global Plan of Action* as adopted by the Fourth FAO International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, held in Leipzig, Germany, in June 1996. The overview includes a description of the process through which the *Global Plan of Action* was developed and identifies efforts to support its implementation, including the establishment of a Facilitating Mechanism. The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (International Treaty) refers to the rolling *Global Plan of Action* as one of its supporting components, and calls upon the Contracting Parties of the International Treaty to promote its effective implementation and to provide a coherent framework, *inter alia*, for capacity-building, technology transfer and exchange of information.<sup>4</sup>
3. The document also suggests a process and timeline for the review and update of the *Global Plan of Action*, for consideration by the Working Group, to assist it to recommend to the Commission a process for updating the *Global Plan of Action*.

## II. BACKGROUND

### Development and rationale of the current *Global Plan of Action*

4. The *Global Plan of Action* adopted in 1996 is intended as a framework, guide and catalyst for action at community, national, regional and international levels. It seeks to create an efficient system for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources, through better cooperation, coordination and planning and through the strengthening of capacities. The *Global Plan of Action* contains 20 priority activities, grouped in four thematic areas: (i) *In situ*

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<sup>1</sup> CGRFA-11/07/Report, paragraph 41.

<sup>2</sup> CGRFA-11/07/Report, paragraph 43.

<sup>3</sup> CGRFA-11/07/Report, paragraph 41.

<sup>4</sup> Article 14 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

conservation and development; (ii) *Ex situ* conservation; (iii) Use of Plant Genetic Resources; and (iv) Institution and capacity building.

5. The *Global Plan of Action* was developed in response to the FAO Conference and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, through Agenda 21, that 'called for the development of a periodic report on the *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* and a rolling *Global Plan of Action*, which were presented at the Fourth 'International Technical Conference' on Plant Genetic Resources.<sup>5</sup> It was agreed that a rolling *Global Plan of Action* should be developed, including programmes and activities aimed at filling gaps, overcoming constraints and facing emergency situations as identified in *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, allowing countries to monitor activities, determine priorities, and oversee programmes in the area of plant genetic resources.

6. A country-driven preparatory process was adopted for the development of the *Global Plan of Action*, based on the recommendations from Country Reports, sub-regional and regional preparatory meetings. The first *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* provided the technical background for the development of the *Global Plan of Action*. The report was based on the information provided through an elaborate process, including over 150 Country Reports, and the results of 11 regional and sub-regional meetings. Extensive use was made of data from the FAO World Information and Early Warning System (WIEWS), and additional inputs provided by international institutions, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the private sector.

7. The resulting rolling *Global Plan of Action* was formally adopted by 150 countries through the 'Leipzig Declaration' during the Fourth FAO International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources held in Leipzig, Germany, in June 1996. It was agreed during the Leipzig Process, that the overall progress in the implementation and the related follow-up processes would be monitored and guided by the national governments and other members of FAO, through the Commission.<sup>6</sup>

8. The *Global Plan of Action* was endorsed by the Twenty-Ninth Session of the FAO Conference<sup>7</sup>, by the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>8</sup> and by the Heads of State and Government at the FAO World Food Summit in 1997<sup>9</sup>, as well as by the participants at the Global Forum on Agricultural Research Conference in 2000.<sup>10</sup>

9. The International Treaty refers to the *Global Plan of Action* as one of its supporting components (Article 14) and as a priority basis for its Funding Strategy (Article 17). The inclusion of the *Global Plan of Action* in the International Treaty and the establishment of its Facilitating Mechanism emphasized the need for renewed investment into the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* at national, regional and international levels, in order to contribute to food security, sustainable agricultural development and the attainment of sustainable livelihoods.

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<sup>5</sup> ITCPGR/96/REP

<sup>6</sup> ITCPGR/96/REP, paragraph. 21.

<sup>7</sup> C 1997/Rep,Resolution 1/97.

<sup>8</sup> UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/V/5

<sup>9</sup> World Food Summit Plan of Action, paragraph 24.

<sup>10</sup> Dreseden Declaration on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture  
<http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/207095/pgrfadec.pdf>

### Implementation and monitoring of the current *Global Plan of Action*

10. Since 1996, the *Global Plan of Action* has provided a coherent framework for the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, including institutional strengthening and capacity-building. Its development and implementation has substantially increased the understanding of the importance of plant genetic resources, and resulted in significant investments to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of these essential resources.

11. FAO hosts the Facilitating Mechanism of the *Global Plan of Action* that provides a portal with comprehensive technical information for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*. The portal also contains a wide range of information on projects, activities and funding opportunities for activities that contribute to the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources.<sup>11</sup> A brief progress report on the Facilitating Mechanism is provided in the document CGRFA/WG-PGR-4/09/4.

12. At its Seventh Regular Session, the Commission requested “that FAO play a proactive and creative role in facilitating and monitoring implementation of the Global Plan of Action”.<sup>12</sup> In response to this request, FAO developed a new approach for monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, which promotes a country-driven, participatory and capacity-building process culminating in the establishment of national information-sharing mechanisms which play an important role as monitoring tools and as components of the WIEWS.<sup>13</sup>

13. The Commission considered progress reports on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* at its Eighth<sup>14</sup>, Ninth<sup>15</sup> and Tenth<sup>16</sup> Regular Sessions. At its Ninth Regular Session, the Commission supported the establishment, at national level, of processes to share information among stakeholders on the implementation of the Plan, and supported the proposal for a pilot testing phase. The Commission also considered useful a list of indicators and a reporting format developed by the Secretariat for the purpose of monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* and instructed FAO to further refine them through pilot testing in a number of countries and on the basis of technical advice provided by the Commission’s Working Group. The Commission stressed that the preparatory process for the second *State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* “should be fully integrated with the process of monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.”<sup>17</sup>

14. At its Tenth Regular Session, the Commission reviewed progress in developing its new monitoring approach, acknowledged the successful pilot phase and its evaluation and adopted the revised indicators and reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*<sup>18</sup>. The Commission 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 *State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. It confirmed that the preparatory process for the second *State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* should be fully integrated with the process of monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, in order to minimize the reporting burden on Members. The Commission also noted that the second *State of the*

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.globalplanofaction.org/>

<sup>12</sup> CGRFA-7/97/REP paragraph. 19.

<sup>13</sup> See <http://apps3.fao.org/wiews/wiews.jsp> and [www.pgrfa.org](http://www.pgrfa.org)

<sup>14</sup> CGRFA-8/99/3

<sup>15</sup> CGRFA-9/02/6

<sup>16</sup> CGRFA-10/04/Inf.6.

<sup>17</sup> CGRFA-8/99/REP, paragraph. 20.

<sup>18</sup> CGRFA-10/04, Inf.5

*World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* should provide a sound basis for updating the *Global Plan of Action*.

### III. PROPOSED PLAN FOR THE PROCESS OF UPDATING THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

15. As a strategic framework, the *Global Plan of Action* needs to be periodically reviewed, and updated as necessary, to ensure that it continues to best serve country needs. The International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, in adopting the *Global Plan of Action*, confirmed the need for review and specified that “such a review should deal with progress made at national, regional and international levels in implementation, elaboration, and adjustment as appropriate, of the Plan, thus making it a “rolling” plan as recommended in Agenda 21.”<sup>19</sup>

16. At its Eleventh Regular Session the Commission agreed that the updated *Global Plan of Action* would be considered at its Thirteenth Regular Session. The Commission requested that FAO submit to its forthcoming Twelfth Regular Session a proposed plan for the process of updating the *Global Plan of Action* and requested its Working Group to consider elements of such a plan.

17. The need for updating of the *Global Plan of Action* has also been stressed by the Governing Body of the International Treaty. The Governing Body, at its First Session, defined as initial priorities of its Funding Strategy, the priority activity areas of the rolling *Global Plan of Action*, for further development by the Governing Body.<sup>20</sup> At its Second session, in identifying the priorities for the use of resources under its direct control, the Governing Body focused, within the priority areas of the *Global Plan of Action*, on achieving benefits “in the pressing priority areas, identified for a limited period of time.” *Annex 1* to the Funding Strategy also states that “the next iteration of the rolling *Global Plan of Action* will be important in the identification of future priorities.”<sup>21</sup>

18. A proposed plan for the process of updating the *Global Plan of Action*, as requested by the Commission, is given in *Table 1* below. The plan foresees a series of regional meetings organized in collaboration with regional partner organizations; these meetings would review the status of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture at the regional level and identify areas of the *Global Plan of Action* which require updating as well as possible gaps of the *Global Plan of Action*.

19. Two regional meetings have already been held (Near East and Latin America and the Caribbean) in collaboration with partners, with extra-budgetary resources from Italy, Norway and Spain. The meeting reports of these consultations have been made available to the Working Group, as an information document.<sup>22</sup> Participants of both meetings indicated that the Priority Activities, covered by the *Global Plan of Action*, should remain the main areas for future action. While new areas in the field of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture had emerged, it was considered that those could be incorporated into existing thematic areas of the *Global Plan of Action*. However, some issues, such as climate change, might not be adequately reflected yet in the *Global Plan of Action* and would therefore have to be added. The regional consultations in the other regions are subject to the availability of extra-budgetary financial resources.

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<sup>19</sup> ITCPR/96/REP, paragraph. 21.

<sup>20</sup> IT/GB-1/06/Report, Appendix F, III.4.

<sup>21</sup> IT/GB-2/07/Report, Appendix D.1.

<sup>22</sup> CGRFA/WG-PGR-4/09/Inf.3

20. The process of updating the *Global Plan of Action* will require input from countries in all regions, as well as consultations with relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Further consultations with relevant stakeholders may therefore, be necessary. A joint meeting of the Bureau of the Commission and of the Governing Body of the International Treaty is proposed to ensure that interests and priorities identified by the Governing Body are sufficiently reflected in the updated *Global Plan of Action*.

21. The proposed plan covers the time span from CGRFA-12 to CGRFA-13. In order to complete the review and update of the rolling *Global Plan of Action* for consideration by the Commission, at its Thirteenth Regular Session, a first draft updated *Global Plan of Action* would need to be available in early 2011. The Working Group could then consider the draft updated *Global Plan of Action* prior to the Thirteenth Regular Session of the Commission. Accordingly, *Table 1* suggests steps and timing for consideration by the Working Group.

22. The Governing Body of the International Treaty, at its Third Session, in considering the joint report of the Commission and the Treaty Secretariats, *Cooperation between the Governing Body and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and coordination of their fields of intergovernmental work*<sup>23</sup>, noted the need to ensure close collaboration between the Commission and the Governing Body with regard to the *Global Plan of Action*. More specifically, the Governing Body invited the Bureaus of the two Bodies to hold a joint meeting to review the first draft updated *Global Plan of Action*. The Governing Body's request is reflected accordingly in *Table 1*.

**TABLE 1: UPDATING THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION:  
INDICATIVE PROCESSES AND TIMELINE REQUIRED**

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Process</b>
<b>CGRFA-12 / 2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for the process of updating the <i>Global Plan of Action</i>, including consideration of options for the adoption of the updated <i>Global Plan of Action</i></li> <li>Consideration of Progress Report on the Facilitating Mechanism for the implementation of the <i>Global Plan of Action</i></li> </ul>
<b>2010</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional meetings to consider the update of the <i>Global Plan of Action</i></li> <li>Consultation with partners on update of the <i>Global Plan of Action</i></li> <li>Preparation of first draft updated <i>Global Plan of Action</i></li> </ul>
<b>2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint meeting of the Bureau of the Commission and the Bureau of the Treaty Governing Body to review the first draft of the updated <i>Global Plan of Action</i></li> <li>Review of the draft updated <i>Global Plan of Action</i> by the Working Group at its Fifth Session</li> </ul>
<b>CGRFA-13/2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CONSIDERATION OF THE UPDATED <i>GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION</i> FOR ADOPTION</li> <li>Provide guidance with regards to the implementation and monitoring of the implementation of the <i>Global Plan of Action</i></li> </ul>

<sup>23</sup> IT/GB-3/09/17

#### IV. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

23. The Working Group may wish to recommend
- that the Commission request FAO to update the *Global Plan of Action*, according to the process and timeline proposed in *Table 1*, in order to identify areas that need to be reviewed and activities that may need to be added;
  - that the Commission request FAO to prepare the updated *Global Plan of Action* based primarily on the updated *State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* and the advice received during regional meetings, and consultations of relevant stakeholders;
  - that the Commission encourage relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to provide advice and views to FAO in a timely manner to facilitate updating of the *Global Plan of Action*;
  - that the Commission encourage Governments to make available the necessary resources for updating of the *Global Plan of Action* in a timely manner;
  - that the Commission encourage relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to report to the Commission on their activities that are contributing to the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, according to the review schedule adopted by the Commission.