



8 August 2013

## Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

### Access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources for food and agriculture

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The Food and Agriculture Organization has the honour to refer to the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Commission) established in accordance with Article VI.1 of the Constitution of the Organization. The Commission is an intergovernmental forum for discussion and negotiation by Governments on matters related to biodiversity for food and agriculture.

The Commission, at its Fourteenth Regular Session (Rome, 15 - 19 April 2013) considered the need for, and modalities of access and benefit-sharing arrangements for genetic resources for food and agriculture. The Commission established a Team of Technical and Legal Experts on Access and Benefit-sharing (TTLE ABS) with the mandate to help prepare the meetings of the intergovernmental technical working groups (working groups) and written materials and propose guidance for the working groups. The experts will also participate in designated portions of the working group meetings dedicated to addressing access and benefit-sharing issues, to help inform and shape the working group discussions and output. After each working group meeting, the experts will work with the Secretariat of the Commission to compile the outputs of the working groups into *Draft Elements to Facilitate Domestic Implementation of Access and Benefit-Sharing for Different Subsectors of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* (the Draft Elements) and communicate the Draft Elements to the regions for their information.

The Draft Elements which, according to the Commission, would be voluntary tools to assist national governments, not new international access and benefit-sharing instruments, will build, amongst other inputs, on country reports on the conditions under which specific genetic resources for food and agriculture are exchanged and utilized as well as on reports by relevant stakeholders on voluntary codes of conduct, guidelines and best practices and/or standards in relation to access and benefit-sharing for all subsectors of genetic resources for food and agriculture. The Draft Elements will be provided to the Commission at its next Session for its consideration.

#### **List of stakeholders able to identify commonly accepted practices of using and exchanging genetic resources for food and agriculture (Deadline: 31 October 2013)**

As requested by the Commission, the Secretary of the Commission wishes to invite Commission Members to identify stakeholders within the respective subsectors to help define and illustrate commonly accepted practices of using and exchanging genetic resources for food and agriculture, and to consider how subsector-specific factors might be addressed within an access and benefit-sharing system. The list of stakeholders will allow the Commission Secretariat to facilitate awareness raising and capacity-building activities.

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This communication is sent to addressees of invited FAO Members 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 communication is also being sent to heads of selected international organizations.

**Report on the conditions under which genetic resources for food and agriculture are exchanged and used  
(Deadline: 30 November 2013)**

As requested by the Commission, the Secretary of the Commission also wishes to invite countries to report, at national and/ or regional levels, on the conditions under which specific genetic resources for food and agriculture are exchanged and utilized, with the engagement of relevant stakeholders, including institutions, in all subsectors. As requested by the Commission, the Secretariat will compile the information obtained for consideration by the Commission's working groups.

The lists of stakeholders and the reports on the conditions under which genetic resources for food and agriculture are exchanged and used should be provided to Ms Linda Collette, Secretary, Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, at [CGRFA@fao.org](mailto:CGRFA@fao.org) by 30 November 2013.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to its Members and their accredited Permanent Representations and Embassies the assurance of its highest consideration.