



Invitation to the
Fifteenth Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
Rome, Italy, 19-23 January 2015

The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has the honour to extend an invitation to attend the Fifteenth Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture which will be held at FAO Headquarters in Rome from 19 to 23 January 2015. The opening meeting will begin at 10.00 hours on Monday 19 January 2015. The Session will be preceded by a one-day Special Event on *Food Security and Genetic Diversity*, on 16 January 2015, an information seminar on the topic “Towards *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*”, on 17 January 2015, and by regional consultations on 18 January 2015.

The Session is being convened under the provisions of Article VI-1 of the FAO Constitution, and is open to all members of the Commission and to observers. Membership of the Commission, which is open to all Members of the Organization, shall be composed of those Members which notify the Director-General in writing of their desire to become members. Membership of the Commission does not place any financial burden on the Government. The Statutes of the Commission and a list of its current membership are attached. Expenses incurred in connection with attendance at the Session and travel of representatives and observers shall be borne by the Governments or organizations concerned. The Organization takes pleasure in inviting FAO Member Nations which are not members of the Commission to apply for membership by returning the attached form duly completed and to consider this communication an invitation to attend the Session.

The 15th Regular Session of the Commission will be conducted in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The Provisional Agenda is attached. Other documents may be downloaded, as they become available, from the Commission's website:

<http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa>

In the designation of their delegation, Members may wish to take into consideration that, in line with the Commission's Multi-Year-Programme of Work (MYPOW), the upcoming Session will focus on: animal, forest, plant as well as microbial and invertebrate genetic resources; the preparation of *The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*; access and benefit-sharing; climate change and genetic resources for food and agriculture; and biotechnology. Attention is drawn to Rule V.2 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure which state that members of the Commission should, as far as possible, be represented by delegations consisting of senior officials highly qualified to contribute actively to a multi-disciplinary consideration of the subjects on the agenda of the Commission.

This invitation is sent to addressees of invited FAO Members and Non-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 invitation is also being sent to heads of selected international organizations.

Members are kindly reminded that the Commission will elect the Chairperson and six Vice-Chairpersons at the end of the session. In addition, the Commission will elect the Members of its intergovernmental technical working groups on animal, plant and forest genetic resources.

Members of the Commission and Members and Associate Members that are not members of the Commission are kindly invited to inform the Director-General, as early as possible, of the names, official titles and addresses, including telephone, fax numbers and e-mail addresses, of their representatives, alternates, associates and advisers who will attend the Commission session. Online registration is available through the password-protected FAO Members Gateway at:

<http://www.fao.org/members-gateway/en/>

Instructions for online registration can be downloaded from this site. Please note that online registration requires the uploading of a recent passport-size digital photograph.

Representatives from states that are not Members or Associate Members of the Organization and from international organizations designated to attend the meeting as observers, are requested to forward their names, official titles and addresses by email to cgrfa@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.