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

- 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.

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.

The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has the honour to announce that the 10th 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 17 to 19 June 2020. The opening will begin at 10.00 hours on Wednesday 17 June 2020.

The Session will be preceded by the First International Symposium on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture which will be held on 15 and 16 June 2020, at FAO headquarters. It will address in situ conservation and on-farm management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Further information on the Symposium will be made available in due time on the website of the Working Group (see link below).

The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture established the Working Group at its 7th Session in May 1997. Its Members and their Alternates, as elected by the 17th Regular Session of the Commission in February 2019, are as follows:

Africa: Algeria, Cameroon, Eritrea, Senegal, Zambia
  First Alternate: Malawi
  Second Alternate: Morocco
Asia: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand
  First Alternate: Malaysia
  Second Alternate: Bhutan
Europe: France, Georgia, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Switzerland
  First Alternate: Bosnia and Herzegovina
  Second Alternate: Sweden
Latin America and the Caribbean: Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Jamaica, Peru
  First Alternate: Costa Rica
  Second Alternate: Cuba
Near East: Egypt, Kuwait, Sudan, Yemen
  First Alternate: Saudi Arabia
  Second Alternate: United Arab Emirates
North America: Canada, United States of America
Southwest Pacific: Cook Islands, Samoa
  First Alternate: Tonga
  Second Alternate: Fiji

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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.
The Session is being convened under the Regular Programme of the Organization. It will be conducted in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, in accordance with confirmation of participation by the requested deadline.

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, one of the elected Alternates from the same region shall replace the Member in a timely manner. 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.

Upon request to the Commission Secretariat, Members of the Commission that are not Members of the Working Group may participate in the Working Group in observer capacity. The Working Group, or the Bureau on its behalf, may invite experts and representatives of specialized international organizations to attend its meetings as observers.

The 17th Regular Session of the Commission requested the Working Groups to meet before the next regular Session of the Commission (http://www.fao.org/3/mz618en/mz618en.pdf). The Working Group will review (i) 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); (ii) the status and trends of seed policies; (iii) the preparation of the Third Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; and (iv) cross-sectoral issues relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources, including access and benefit-sharing, and “digital sequence information”. The Working Group will also discuss options for the organization of the Commission’s future intersessional work.

In line with FAO's objective to minimize the environmental impact of the Organization’s processes and to contribute to climate neutrality, the 10th 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. The Provisional Agenda is enclosed. All meeting and background documents may be downloaded, as they become available, from the Working Group’s dedicated website: http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/thematic-sitemap/theme/seeds-pgr/itwg/10th/en/.

The Director-General would appreciate receiving the names, official titles and addresses of the representatives designated to attend the Session by 30 March 2020. 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. Online registration requires the uploading of a recent passport-size digital photograph of each participant.

Participants 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.

Before travelling, participants should check with the competent Italian Consulate if they need a visa to enter Italy. Kindly note that visas can be requested in the country of origin (country in which the participant holds citizenship) or in the country of residence (country in which the participant resides at the time of visa application). Those participants who do not have an Italian Consulate in their countries, may apply at the corresponding Italian Consulate in a neighbouring country, or at any other Consulate which belongs to a Schengen or European country. Visa applications should be submitted to the Italian Consulate one month before arrival in Italy. It is the responsibility of participants to request their visa applications personally, arrange for an appointment and present all the necessary documentation to the Italian Consulate. Participants who do not need an entry visa to enter Italy should ensure that their passports are valid for at least three months after the intended date of departure from the Schengen area. In these cases, upon entering Italy, border authorities may require the participants to show evidence for the reason and the duration of their stay in Italy. Participants with non-direct flights to Rome should check whether a transit visa is necessary to enter the transit area of international airports.