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para la
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y la
Alimentación

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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON
ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Rome, Italy, 8-10 September 1998

INTRODUCTION

1. The First Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture met in Rome, Italy, from 8 to 10 September 1998. A list of Delegates and Observers is attached as *Appendix E*.
2. Mr Abdoulaye Sawadogo, Assistant Director-General, Agriculture Department, opened the meeting. He described the process that had led to the establishment of the Working Group, and noted the task, namely to further the development of the Global Strategy for its consideration at its Eighth Session, that the Commission had given to the Working Group for this biennium.
3. The Working Group noted that Article III of the Statutes of the Working Group provides that “the Members of the Working Group shall be elected at each regular Session of the Commission and shall serve until the next regular Session of the Commission, and that members will be eligible for re-election.” The Members of the Working Group that were elected at the Seventh Regular Session of the Commission in May 1997 are listed in *Appendix D*.
4. Ms Elzbieta Martyniuk (Poland) was elected as Chair of the Working Group, Mr Aiguo Wang (China) as Vice-Chair, and Mr Kor Oldenbroek (the Netherlands) as Rapporteur.
5. The meeting Agenda as adopted is given in *Appendix A*.
6. A message was read from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which noted the support given by the Conference of the Parties to the development of the Global Strategy at its Third and Fourth Meetings, emphasizing the need to develop plant and animal genetic resources in a holistic manner. The message is attached as *Appendix C*.

**IDENTIFICATION OF THE MAJOR CONSTITUENTS OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY
AND PREPARATION OF THE MULTI-YEAR WORKPLAN**

7. The Working Group considered document CGRFA/WG-AnGR/98/2, which outlined proposals for further development of the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources (the Global Strategy), including for the preparation of the first *Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources*.
8. The Working Group considered the various constituents of the Global Strategy and the elements of the proposed multi-year workplan for its future development and implementation. It stressed the essential role and value of farm animal genetic resources in achieving world food security in accordance with the principles of the Convention on Biological Diversity, for those countries that had signed the Convention, and emphasized the need for coherent and sustained efforts in maintaining and further developing these resources. The Global Strategy should aim to provide a framework to stimulate national participation in the global effort, with each country being responsible for the management of their own national farm animal genetic resources, and for the implementation of the Global Strategy.

9. The Working Group recognized that a range of national, bilateral, regional and multilateral development programmes and activities are already contributing, in some countries, to some of the objectives of the Global Strategy. In noting that some national, regional and global organizations are involved in the conservation, development and use of farm animal genetic resources, the Working Group stressed the importance of creating synergy, and promoting the optimal utilization of human, financial and other such resources, through an overview of activities, and mechanisms for promoting cooperation and collaboration, within the context of the Global Strategy. It believed that it was important to have an overview of all such activities, probably in the context of the development of a *Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources*.

10. The Working Group noted the success of the Pilot Project on Animal Genetic Resources in Asia, that had been made possible by the generous financial contribution of the Government of Japan. It also noted the success in developing National Focal Points and plans for the management of farm animal genetic resources, and it stressed the need that financial resources be urgently sought to establish and continue Regional Focal Points, and enable subsequent activities in the regions to be carried out, within the framework of the Global Strategy.

11. The Working Group emphasized that animal genetic resources are crucial in responding to changes in climate and economic conditions, or to disease outbreaks, which affect animal production and productivity, and rural development. The Working Group brought forward the need to examine the relationship between the loss of animal genetic resources and environmental degradation, and the need to better integrate livestock and crop systems, in order to achieve the sustainable use of agro-ecosystems. The Working Group emphasized the value and potential of locally-adapted resources in the optimal utilization of a wide variety of production environments.

12. The Working Group stressed that case studies, drawing upon existing information, could contribute to analysing the positive or negative impact of animal genetic resources management on husbandry activities, including evaluating the effect on various livestock production systems of the introduction of exotic genetic resources.

13. The Working Group stressed that the diversity of animal genetic resources needed to be better characterized and maintained, in order to provide countries and farmers with flexibility for a wide variety of production environments. The Working Group noted that under-utilized species and breeds may have considerable potential, particularly at regional and local level, and should be examined with a view to increasing their potential contribution to food and agriculture, within the context of the Global Strategy.

14. The Working Group stressed the importance of National Focal Points in ensuring the effective participation of all countries in the development of the Global Strategy, and also noted the potential role of Regional Focal Points in meeting the particular needs of participating regions.

15. The Working Group stressed the importance of ensuring the participation of experts from all regions of the world in the further development and implementation of the Global Strategy, noting the need for regional balance in expert groups. Significant scientific and technical expertise already existed in the different regions, and the Working Group therefore indicated the need for FAO to draw upon such expertise to help design and implement training programmes and other capacity-building activities.

16. The Working Group stressed the need to involve local, regional and international governmental and non-governmental organizations, including the private sector, in National and Regional Focal Point activities, in order to ensure wide involvement in animal genetic resources activities.

17. The Working Group noted that animal genetic resources are not uniformly distributed, and that developing countries with high levels of farm animal diversity should be given special attention, in a regionally balanced manner, in setting priorities for international assistance. Such international assistance should help them to create National and Regional Focal Points, in order to

enhance their animal genetic resources management capacity, as a key element of the Global Strategy.

18. The importance of effective communication in increasing general awareness of the many roles and values of animal genetic resources, and their contribution to world agricultural production and rural development, was stressed by the Working Group, as well as the need to enhance the participation of breeding organizations and other organizations in efforts to conserve animal genetic resources.

19. The Working Group stressed the importance of increasing public awareness and understanding of the many roles and values of animal genetic resources, taking advantage of all suitable information and communication tools, including television.

20. The Working Group recognized the significant contribution that FAO had already made in developing management tools for animal genetic resources as part of development of the Global Strategy, emphasizing the importance of DAD-IS as an information and potential communication tool, and agreed on the importance of guidelines to assist countries in structuring the technical elements of their national programmes. Many other organizations are contributing to efforts to improve the management of data and information on animal genetic resources.

21. The Working Group noted the need to promote and to coordinate systematic characterization activities, in order to identify and describe animal genetic resources, and to guide conservation and utilization activities, so that countries could better conserve, develop and use the full range of animal genetic resources. It recognized that such characterization was also essential, given the large number of threatened breeds of livestock, in order to target conservation efforts to maintain the greatest genetic diversity and to make the best use of scarce financial resources.

22. The Working Group recognized that governmental involvement was essential in further developing the framework and constituent parts of the Global Strategy, and stressed the need for the Working Group to meet as soon as possible, in order to consider in more detail appropriate actions and activities that were necessary to advance development and implementation of the Global Strategy.

THE REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

23. The Working Group considered document CGRFA/WG-AnGR-1/98/3 regarding the possible initiation of the first *Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

24. The Working Group stressed the importance of enhancing understanding and awareness of the status of animal genetic resources, the state of country capacity to manage their resources, and the state of the art, in terms of the methodologies and technologies available for the better use, development and conservation of these resources. They noted that preparation of the *Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources* would contribute significantly to enhancing such understanding and awareness.

25. The Working Group stressed the need for the process of the preparation of the *Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources* to be developed in a manner that would build national capacity, particularly through early training, and would lay the basis for regular and cost-effective updating of the relevant data and information.

26. Countries' capacities to report on the state of their animal genetic resources vary considerably, and the Working Group therefore stressed the need to design an approach, including consultation with countries on practical guidelines, to the preparation of the *Report on the State of the World's*

Animal Genetic Resources, that makes allowance for these different capacities, and to ensure that sufficient time is available, in the light of individual country capacity.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DRAFT FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING THE GLOBAL STRATEGY

27. The Working Group considered the *Framework for Evaluating Progress in Further Development and Implementation of the Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources*, contained in Appendix 2 of CGRFA/WG-AnGR-1/98/Inf.1.

28. The Working Group noted that this Framework contained an extensive list of criteria and indicators for measuring progress in the implementation of the Global Strategy, which might be used by countries to assist them to monitor and to report on their animal genetic resources activities.

29. It was observed by the Working Group that many of the criteria and indicators could be useful in gathering and contributing data and information for the preparation of the *Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources*.

30. Reporting on genetic resources was also required in several global forums, including the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity: in this connection, the Working Group observed that the criteria and indicators listed could provide a basis to increase coordination and collaboration in reporting in different forums.

OTHER BUSINESS

31. The Working Group expressed deep concern for the non-use of the Arabic and Chinese languages in the information documents in the meeting, and strongly urged FAO to correct this in coming sessions.

32. The Working Group noted the importance that FAO has given to animal genetic resources, and their valuable contribution to national, regional and world food security. The Working Group expressed its gratitude to the United States of America, for having made available financial resources to help some developing countries that are Members of the Working Group to include national technical experts in their delegations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

33. Acknowledging the work already done by countries, stakeholders and non-governmental organizations in animal genetic resource management, and recognizing the work already done by FAO in developing the animal genetic resources global strategy, the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group makes the following recommendations to the Commission, in order further to develop and increase activities in the field of animal genetic resources:

- (i) that FAO continue to shape more clearly the framework, and further develop the constituent elements, of this global strategy for the management of farm animal genetic resources, and continue to provide core programme budgetary support, and that all stakeholders seek to mobilize extra-budgetary support, from all sources, for the conservation and sustainable utilization of animal genetic resources;
- (ii) that countries that have not already done so urgently identify National Focal Points/Coordinators and, where appropriate, Regional Focal Points; and

- (iii) that FAO coordinate the development of a country-driven *Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources*, that would provide an assessment of countries' animal genetic resource programmes and the state of farm animal resources.

**IDENTIFICATION OF FURTHER PRIORITY ACTIONS REQUIRED
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY:
IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

34. The Working Group considered that the implications of these recommendations for the next biennium programme priorities include: the preparation of guidelines, in consultation with countries, to be used for the collection and assembly of existing data and information, for the *Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources*; the enhancement of the functionality of DAD-IS, in order to provide countries with a practical data and information management system; assisting the development of National and Regional Focal Points, including training for National Coordinators as appropriate; the collection and collation of existing data and information on farm animal genetic resources, using DAD-IS and/or other existing data and information management systems; and the initiation of the preparation, in consultation with countries, of the first *Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources* itself.