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Item 3.3 of the Draft Provisional Agenda

**COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**Tenth Regular Session**

Rome, 8-12 November 2004

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE AND ITS WORKING GROUP, REGARDING PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its Ninth Session, the Commission considered the report of the First Session of its Inter-governmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture<sup>1</sup>. In endorsing the report, the Commission made specific recommendations to guide future work on certain elements of the FAO Global System, in particular, the new monitoring approach for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, the Facilitating Mechanism for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*; development of plant genetic resources networks and the assessment of their effectiveness; and the possible need to update elements of the Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer. The Commission also considered the preparation of the second *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.
2. The Commission agreed that its Working Group should provide further guidance on these issues, examine issues related to “plant genetic resources for food and agriculture use through strengthening germplasm conservation, plant breeding capacities and seed systems”.<sup>2</sup> The Second Session of the Working Group took place from 5 to 7 November 2003.<sup>3</sup>
3. This document summarizes relevant follow-up activities, and requests the Commission’s guidance in further advancing work on plant genetic resources. Preparatory activities for the second *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* are presented separately.<sup>4</sup>
3. The Commission also made recommendations on the International Network of *Ex Situ* Collections under the Auspices of FAO: progress in this regard is reported in a separate document.<sup>5</sup>

## II. FOLLOW-UP TO RECOMMENDATIONS ON CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE GLOBAL SYSTEM FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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

4. Three main aspects are presented for consideration to the Commission: the main conclusions of the progress report on implementation by countries of the *Global Plan of Action*; the Facilitating Mechanism for implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*; and the new monitoring approach for implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.

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<sup>1</sup> CGRFA-9/02/5.

<sup>2</sup> CGRFA-9/02/REP, para. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Its report is document CGRFA-10/04/4.

<sup>4</sup> CGRFA-10/5 Add.1.

<sup>5</sup> CGRFA-10/04/6.

### Progress Report on Implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*

5. At its Ninth Regular Session, “the Commission highlighted the importance of monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* through a country-driven and flexible system that could respond to different and evolving national and regional needs and priorities, while ensuring the necessary level of standardization.” As requested by the Commission, FAO undertook a survey using the same questionnaire that was sent in the year 2000, with very minor changes introduced to improve clarity. In this occasion, 77 countries participated in the survey, five of which through pilot testing of the new monitoring approach, with a total participation of about 50 per cent. The decrease in the number of countries is evenly distributed among regions. The full progress report is presented in an information document.<sup>6</sup> The main conclusions resulting from the progress report are presented in the following sections.

6. Countries confirmed recognition of the *Global Plan of Action* as the basis for their national Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (plant genetic resources) programmes and plans. Yet the lack of sufficient funding is leading to strong differences among countries and regions in the progress achieved. The entry into force of the International Treaty and the establishment of the Facilitating Mechanism for the implementation of the *Plan* might help in reducing these differences.

7. There is general progress on *in situ* conservation activities, with special emphasis on surveying and inventorying plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, funded almost solely by national budgets, and on activities addressing on-farm management and improvement, with strong international support. Special attention is required concerning the low-level of activities reported to assist farmers in disaster situations to restore agricultural systems in disaster-prone areas such as Africa. The slow progress in establishing information systems in these countries, including documenting local germplasm so it can be restored after disasters, deserves additional consideration. Wild crop relatives are receiving stronger attention in the European, Africa and Asia and the Pacific regions, with increasing support from donors.

8. The positive trend observed in *ex situ* conservation activities in previous monitoring exercises is maintained and even strengthened. However, long-term funding of such activities is at risk, and countries are already reporting budget cuts and staff reductions. Also important is the fact that the level of *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation activities is not matched by more attention to strengthening national capacities related to the utilization of the collections. Although the Asia and the Pacific region, and the European region, are undertaking significant efforts, the level of characterization of *ex situ* collections is overall still rather low. Some strategic thinking may be required at the national level to address these issues.

9. Countries, with the exception of those in the European and Asia and the Pacific regions, reported concerns in terms of achieving the regeneration of their collections, with almost no external support. In this context, the potential role of networks to assist countries on issues that cannot be fully supported at national level, particularly on capacity building, should be strongly considered.

10. The Commission may wish to:

- i) note increasing regional differences in the level of implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, and recommend initiatives to balance implementation of all priority activity areas at national level;
- ii) note that assistance on capacity building remains essential to help countries in addressing their technical issues related to the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, and recommend that relevant national and international institutions respond favourably to requests for such assistance; and

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<sup>6</sup> CGRFA-10/04/inf.6.

- iii) make recommendations on any other issues in relation to the twenty activity areas of the *Global Plan of Action*.<sup>7</sup>

### **Facilitating Mechanism for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action***

11. In adopting the *Global Plan of Action*, the Fourth FAO International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources emphasized that “the follow-up processes calls for action at local, national and international levels and should involve all parties which were associated with (its) preparation”.<sup>8</sup>

12. Since the adoption of the *Plan*, considerable experience has been gained in many areas critical for its implementation. However, the wish of many stakeholders that the *Global Plan of Action* provides for coherent action has not been fully realized.

13. With the adoption of the International Treaty by FAO Conference (2001), the *Plan* assumed still greater significance. Its role is acknowledged in Article 14 of the International Treaty, which recognized “the rolling Global Plan of Action ... is important to the Treaty, [and] Contracting Parties should promote its effective implementation, including through national actions and, as appropriate, international cooperation...”.

14. In response to a request from the Commission, the Working Group, at its first Session in 2001, discussed a document<sup>9</sup> containing various options to facilitate further implementation of the *Plan*. The Working Group requested the Secretariat to further elaborate on the options for consideration by the Commission.

15. As a follow-up, a document<sup>10</sup> was prepared for consideration of the Commission at its Ninth Regular Session. The Commission stressed that “efforts should ... focus on facilitating the provision of technical and financial resources to developing countries — especially least developed countries, and to countries with economies in transition — to address national priorities for implementing the *Plan*. High priority should also be given to enhancing or creating partnerships for implementation of the *Plan*, promoting linkages among plant genetic resources management, plant breeding and seed sector, and networking, and facilitating communication with international organizations and donors”. The Commission considered that “the facilitating mechanism should give high priority to assisting in the development of the funding strategy to be adopted by the Governing Body of the International Treaty ... However, the Commission noted that there should be no ambiguity in the roles of the Commission and the Governing Body of the International Treaty, or duplication of activities under the facilitating mechanism and the funding strategy of the International Treaty”.<sup>11</sup>

16. The Commission “supported the proposal for a consultation to gather the views of stakeholders on the possible activities of the facilitating mechanism<sup>12</sup>.” This consultation was held at FAO Headquarters in Rome on 23-25 July, 2003, organized by FAO and IPGRI. It sought advice from potential beneficiaries of the Facilitating Mechanism, including national agricultural research systems, farmers’ associations, private sector and regional representatives; and from potential donors who may support the implementation of the *Plan* through the Facilitating

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<sup>7</sup> Country progress in implementing the various activity areas is described in the information document, CGRFA-10/04/inf.6.

<sup>8</sup> *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilisation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, June 1996, Implementation and Financing, para. 2.

<sup>9</sup> CGRFA/WG-PGR-1/01/5.

<sup>10</sup> CGRFA-9/02/9.

<sup>11</sup> CGRFA/9/02/REP. para. 26-29.

<sup>12</sup> CGRFA/9/02/REP. para. 29.

Mechanism, including multilateral and bilateral agencies, foundations, private sector, and international civil society organizations.

17. At its Second Session, in November 2003, the Working Group considered a document on the Facilitating Mechanism<sup>13</sup> and the report of the stakeholders' consultation.<sup>14</sup> The Working Group agreed on the operational principles, activities and operational structure of the Facilitating Mechanism appended to its Report<sup>15</sup> provided to the Commission as document CGRFA-10/04/4. The Working Group reiterated that "the Facilitating Mechanism should be hosted by FAO and operated in partnership with IPGRI", which will mean staff and budgetary commitment by these organizations. The Working Group emphasized that the proposed additional activity (E) (assisting stakeholders to develop project proposals and package proposals) would still require discussion and decision by the Commission. The Working Group also reviewed the proposed objectives of the Facilitating Mechanism and recommended that the Commission should decide on its wording<sup>16</sup>. In addition, it recommended that the Facilitating Mechanism operate under the time frame of the FAO Medium Term Plan, and that FAO and IPGRI submit an operational plan to the next Regular Session of the Commission<sup>17</sup>. The proposed operational plan, prepared jointly by FAO and IPGRI, is provided as Appendix I to this document. FAO and IPGRI have made provision in the medium term, to be able to support these activities, up to US\$ 800,000.

18. The Commission may also wish to appeal to donors to make more resources available to develop the Facilitating Mechanism, and, in the light of the recommendations by the Working Group, provide guidance on:

- i) adoption of an objective for the Facilitating Mechanism;
- ii) approval of the proposed operational principles, activities and operational structure of the Facilitating Mechanism as recommended by the Working Group in Appendix G of its Report, including or not the proposed additional activity (E);
- iii) approval of the draft Operational Plan presented in Appendix I.

### ***Monitoring the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action***

19. The importance of an efficient system for monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* in terms of planning, priority-setting and in achieving the mobilization of financial resources to support national plant genetic resources programmes has been widely recognized<sup>18</sup>.

20. Based on the experience derived from monitoring activities conducted since the adoption of the *Global Plan of Action*, a new approach was proposed to the Ninth Regular Session of the Commission and to its Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources.<sup>19</sup> It relies on four main components, which have been developed by FAO with the collaboration of IPGRI, and with inputs from national programmes on plant genetic resources and an expert group. These components are:

- a) a list of indicators for monitoring the implementation at the country level of all priority activity areas of the *Global Plan of Action*;
- b) a reporting format, which is a structured questionnaire based on these indicators;

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<sup>13</sup> CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/03/5.

<sup>14</sup> CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/03/5/Annex.

<sup>15</sup> CGRFA-10/04/4 (CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/REPORT), para. 28 and Appendix G - *Proposed operational principles, activities and operational structure of the Facilitating Mechanism*.

<sup>16</sup> CGRFA-10/04/4 (CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/REPORT), para. 27.

<sup>17</sup> CGRFA-10/04/4 (CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/REPORT), para. 29.

<sup>18</sup> CGRFA-7/97/REP para. 21; CGRFA-8/99/REP paras. 17 and 29; CGRFA-9/02/REP para. 19; CGRFA/WG-PGR-1/01/REPORT para. 14; CGRFA-10/04/4 (CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/REPORT), para. 19.

<sup>19</sup> As described in documents CGRFA/WG-PGR-1/01/3, CGRFA-9/02/7 and CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/03/4.

- c) a computer application, which has been developed to facilitate and simplify recording, processing, analysis and sharing of the information addressed by the indicators and the questionnaire; and
- d) guidelines for initiating and coordinating this process, including guidelines for the involvement of stakeholders and for establishing a national information-sharing mechanism<sup>20</sup>.

21. The new monitoring approach promotes a country-driven, participatory and capacity building process, culminating with the establishment of national information-sharing mechanisms on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, which will constitute the skeleton of a global monitoring system under the Commission.

22. The Commission “supported the establishment, at the national level, of processes to share information among stakeholders on the implementation of the *Plan*<sup>21</sup>”, and agreed that FAO, in collaboration with IPGRI, should test the new monitoring approach in a number of countries<sup>22</sup>. The Working Group recommended to FAO that the new monitoring approach should then be applied to all countries based on the lessons learned from the pilot testing, and be fully integrated with the process for preparing the second *Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources*, as a fundamental component of the process for developing the Country Reports<sup>23</sup>.

23. In line with these recommendations, the new monitoring approach was successfully tested and implemented during 2003 and 2004 in Cuba, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, Papua New Guinea and Fiji Islands, and evaluated in Germany. With the exception of Germany, which has used its own resources, direct financial support to carry out the pilot testing was provided to countries by FAO through its Regular Programme and through the FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme. In several cases, focal points from countries, which were further ahead in the pilot testing process, travelled to other pilot test countries to provide country-to-country technical assistance. In addition, FAO and IPGRI provided in-kind support (in terms of staff salary and travel) through their Regular Programme budgets.

24. Representatives of the Working Group from countries involved in the pilot testing programme noted with appreciation that “the process had led to the establishment of national information sharing mechanisms in their own countries, and that the overall participatory country-led process had been beneficial. Benefits had included, institutional capacity-development, enhanced data management and increased stakeholder commitment to the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*<sup>24</sup>.” Data gathered through this participatory process have been disseminated by the National Focal Points through CDs and made accessible through WIEWS and country-managed Internet sites established with technical support from FAO. Part of these data have been also used for the preparation of information document *Country Progress Report on the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action*.<sup>25</sup>

25. At its second Session, the Working Group “agreed that FAO should convene a Pilot Phase Evaluation meeting in March 2004, with representation of all regions and all participating pilot testing countries, to examine the lessons learned and, based on these experiences, refine the indicators and reporting format”.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/03/4, paras. 10-17.

<sup>21</sup> CGRFA-10/04/4 (CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/REPORT), paras. 19-21.

<sup>22</sup> CGRFA-9/02/REP, para. 19.

<sup>23</sup> CGRFA-10/04/4 (CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/REPORT), para. 24.

<sup>24</sup> CGRFA-10/04/4 (CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/REPORT), para. 20.

<sup>25</sup> CGRFA-10/04/inf. 6.

<sup>26</sup> CGRFA-10/04/4 (CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/REPORT), para. 24.

26. This meeting was held at FAO Headquarters in Rome on 5-7 May, 2004. It was organized by FAO with the collaboration of IPGRI and the participation of all countries that either had completed testing or had made progress in implementing the new monitoring approach.<sup>27</sup> Country Reports, which describe the process carried out to establish a National Information-Sharing Mechanism on the implementation of the *Plan* and including an analysis of the information gathered, are available through WIEWS and country websites.

27. Based upon the experience gained conducting the pilot testing, country representatives participating in the evaluation meeting revised the indicators and reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the *Plan*. They agreed the consolidated version included in document CGRFA-10/04/Inf.5, which they recommended to be adopted for applying the new monitoring approach to all member countries. Additional recommendations made by country representatives for fine-tuning the multi-stakeholder participatory process and improving the computer application have already been implemented, and were incorporated into the monitoring tool-kit.

28. In view of the positive results produced during the implementation of the pilot testing phase, activities for the implementation of the new monitoring approach have already started in:

- a) Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam, as part of a three-year FAO project funded by Japan, which became operational in June 2003,
- b) Mali and Uzbekistan, with funding from the FAO/Netherlands Partnership Programme and the FAO Regular Programme, and
- c) Bolivia, as part of the activities of an Italian-funded FAO project.

29. The experience gained and the data collected through the pilot testing activities are expected to contribute to the development of higher-order indicators, as requested by the Commission to present a more general analysis of the state of genetic resource conservation and use, and the sharing of such information with other forums, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

30. At its second Session, the Working Group recognized that “significant capacity-development would be required in some developing countries in order for them to implement the new monitoring approach, including training in the use of the software and provision of computer hardware for the national coordinator and participating stakeholders. Specific needs would vary from country to country. The Working Group requested that FAO and IPGRI provide training and other support necessary to respond to countries’ expressed capacity-building needs<sup>28</sup>”.

31. In addition, the Working Group “stressed that the monitoring process and the process for preparing the second *Report of the State of the World’s PGRFA* should be integrated, and will require adequate extra-budgetary financial resources”, “requested the Secretariat to present adjusted cost estimates for monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*” and “appealed to donors to make the necessary resources available rapidly<sup>29</sup>”.

32. Overall budgetary needs for the roll-out to further countries were provided to the Commission at its Ninth Regular Session<sup>30</sup>. Substantial extra-budgetary resources were made available<sup>31</sup> for the pilot testing phase, added to Regular Programme provisions for this purpose. Extra-budgetary needs to apply the new monitoring approach to all countries are, as reported

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<sup>27</sup> The report of the evaluation meeting is presented in CGRFA-10/04/Inf.4.

<sup>28</sup> CGRFA-10/04/4 (CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/REPORT), para. 19-24.

<sup>29</sup> CGRFA-10/04/4 (CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/REPORT), para. 25.

<sup>30</sup> CGRFA-9/02/7 para. 32.

<sup>31</sup> See paragraph 23 of this document.

earlier, estimated at US\$ 20,000 per country for 80-120 countries, that is, between US\$ 1,600,000 and US\$ 2,400,000 from now until 2007. Activities and costs to roll-out the new monitoring approach have been integrated with the costs associated with preparation of the second *Report of the State of the World's PGRFA*, and are indicated in Annex I of Document CGRFA-10/04/5.2.

33. The Commission may wish to provide guidance on action to be taken by the FAO Secretariat in relation to:

- i) the adoption of the revised indicators and reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*<sup>32</sup>;
- ii) the application of the new monitoring approach to all countries in view of the integration of the monitoring activities with the preparation of the second *Report on the State of the World's PGRFA*;
- iii) the mobilization of the necessary extra-budgetary funds to apply the monitoring process to all countries between now and 2007.

## B. INTERNATIONAL PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES NETWORKS

34. Both the *Global Plan of Action*, through its priority activity area 16 (*Promoting networks for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*), and the recently adopted International Treaty, through its Article 16 (*International PGR Networks*), recognise the importance of networks as mechanisms for their implementation. At its Eighth Regular Session, the Commission underlined the "important role of regional (PGRFA) networks in promoting the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*". In preparation for the Ninth Regular Session of the Commission and in the context of Article 16 of the International Treaty, a background study was commissioned by FAO to provide an overview of networks currently contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, and to provide a conceptual basis for analysing the effectiveness and efficiency of these networks. This study was used as a basis for preparation of document CGRFA-9/02/12, *International Plant Genetic Resources Networks*. Having considered the results of the study, the Commission agreed that "the effectiveness of networks should be assessed, and that synergy between different networks should be promoted".

35. The Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources during its Second Session recommended that "case studies on successful networks should be made available to the Commission at its next Regular Session to advance understanding of the characteristics of successful networks, and to encourage greater collaboration".

36. As a follow up to this recommendation, a Background Study Paper has been prepared and provides the requested information for the consideration by the Commission.<sup>33</sup> The study analyzes the characteristics of successful networks on plant genetic resources, by assessing the effectiveness of selected networks using criteria such as, the degree to which the network is closed or open; network organisation and leadership; funding mechanisms; network benefits and outputs; and network communications. Other criteria, such as impacts beyond the objectives, in particular synergies between networks, were also considered. The study also provides an overview of the factors that determine the successfulness of a network and identifies indicators that can be used to assess plant genetic resources networks.

37. The Commission may wish to take note of this study and highlight elements for further analysis and consideration. In particular, the Commission may wish to consider the need for any further analysis and action, including:

- i) how to promote support between networks to increase network-to-network synergies;

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<sup>32</sup> CGRFA-10/04/Inf.4, *Indicators and reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

<sup>33</sup> Background Study Paper No.23, *An analysis of the effectiveness of plant genetic resources networks*.

- ii) how to accommodate training needs of the networks in general;
- iii) how to promote fundraising capacities of networks and to arrive at an inventory of funding sources;
- iv) an analysis of cost efficiency of network functioning; and
- v) development of a roadmap towards task sharing amongst network partners.

### C. INTERNATIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PLANT GERMPLASM COLLECTING AND TRANSFER

38. The *International Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer* was adopted in 1993, and was used as a practical tool for collecting missions and for guidance in formulation of national legislation governing transfer of plant genetic resources<sup>34</sup>. At its Ninth Regular Session, the Commission requested its Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources to consider the *Code of Conduct* and make recommendations to this Session, regarding the possible need to update elements of the *Code*. The Commission invited Member Countries to submit information on measures taken at the national level to implement the *Code* and requested the Secretariat to compile this information for the Working Group<sup>35</sup>.

39. The Working Group considered the information provided by the Member Countries and noted that there was “continued usefulness of the various elements of the *Code of Conduct*, including in developing national legislation”. It recommended however, that in light of other priorities in the work of the Commission, and in the development of the International Treaty, it was inappropriate to update the *Code of Conduct* at present.

40. The Commission may wish to give further guidance on this matter, and indicate possible future action to be taken in relation to the *Code of Conduct*.

## III. FOLLOW-UP TO OTHER ISSUES RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMISSION

### A. STRENGTHENING SEED SYSTEMS

41. The relevance of strengthening seed systems is fully acknowledged in the *Global Plan of Action*. The Commission agreed at its Ninth Regular Session that its Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources should meet to examine issues related to use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture through strengthening germplasm conservation, plant breeding capacities and seed systems<sup>36</sup>. At its second Session, the Working Group considered a document on “strengthening seed systems, which was prepared on the basis of a series of expert consultations on seed policy, seed relief and for updating the FAO Quality Declared Seed system<sup>37</sup>”. It requested the document to be revised in order to incorporate information on the impact of seed systems on the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, to identify gaps and the implications for seed systems of the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Their Report notes that the document should also provide specific recommendations for action by FAO to strengthen seed systems, without duplicating action taken by other relevant organizations.

<sup>34</sup> CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/03/6, para.17-21.

<sup>35</sup> CGRFA-9/02/Rep. para. 60.

<sup>36</sup> CGRFA-9/02/Rep. para. 38.

<sup>37</sup> CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/03/3.

42. The document has been revised in light of the Working Group recommendations and is available to the Commission as information document CGRFA-10/04/Inf.7. Following the recommendations of the Working Group, the document incorporates deeper analysis of the impact of seed systems on conservation and use of plant genetic resources, and it reviews the possible implications of recent international developments, including the entry into force of the International Treaty, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

43. *Main conclusions.* Seed systems are dynamic and complex. Their effectiveness strongly depends on their capacity to meet farmers' needs in terms of productivity and agricultural biodiversity. There are strong linkages between conservation and use of plant genetic resources, particularly on-farm. At the same time, seed systems have to be dynamic to adapt to an increasingly globalised scenario, increasing competitive conditions, and new international rules governing agricultural markets. Strategies to strengthen linkages between market-oriented and community-based seed systems would be essential to safeguard the long-term on-farm maintenance of plant genetic resources. To this end, increased investments in public plant breeding may be needed and the economic incentive for farm-level breeding would need to be greater.

44. International developments, such as the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the revision of the IPPC, and the entry into force of the International Treaty, are being considered by countries in the development of their national seed policy regulatory environment, as discussed in sections III to VI of document CGRFA-10/04/Inf 7.

45. These above conclusions have been highlighted in other intergovernmental forums. In particular, specific recommendations in those lines were made by the Land and Water Use Commission (ALAWUC) for the Near East, an FAO intergovernmental Commission, which held its third session in Doha, Qatar, during 9-11 March 2004. The ALAWUC Commission also recommended to FAO and other organizations to, *inter alia*:

- Assist in identifying opportunities to build partnerships between public and private sectors in seed systems;
- Assist in promoting participatory processes in the development of seed regulatory frameworks and gather information on existing seed regulatory models in various countries;
- Help Member Countries in collecting and sharing accumulated experiences including best practices and country case studies;
- Manage information related to seeds in emergency relief operations and work closely with relevant regional and international organizations and agencies as well as NGOs and local institutions in project implementation;
- Finalize and revise the quality declared seed (QDS) (guidelines) and promote implementation of QDS in the Near East Countries; and
- Provide a forum to discuss compatibility of seed regulatory issues to facilitate the movement of seeds among countries<sup>38</sup>.

46. The Commission may wish to provide guidance on measures that should be taken to help countries strengthen seed systems, which will support the sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, bearing in mind the recommendations of the ALAWUC Commission.

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<sup>38</sup> CGRFA-10/04/inf.7 *Strengthening Seed Systems*.

## **B. TOWARD THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE: STRENGTHENING PLANT BREEDING**

47. The Commission requested the Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources to examine issues related to strengthening plant breeding. During its second Session the Working Group considered document *Toward the Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA): Strengthening Plant Breeding*.<sup>39</sup> The Working Group stressed that the document presented an important step toward finding a better balance between plant genetic resources conservation and use. It also welcomed “FAO’s decision to initiate a comprehensive survey of national capacities and priorities in plant breeding in both public and private sectors, including associated capacities in biotechnologies.” The results of the assessment surveys and workshops are intended to facilitate national and regional level planning and policy, while the derived analytical documentation will contribute to a framework for action to increase plant genetic resource utilization.

48. The Working Group stressed the importance of integrating the survey with the new approach to monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*. The survey was designed with a view to complement the information gathered for Priority Areas 9 to 14 of the *Plan*, related to the use of plant genetic resources. The information database being prepared to host the survey data will be directly linked with information coming from the new monitoring approach.

49. The Working Group strongly supported FAO’s initiation of assessments of national capacities and priorities in plant breeding, which will enable effective national and regional investment strategies and well-focused projects aimed at enhancing national breeding efforts, based on well documented needs and opportunities. The Working Group noted that extra-budgetary resources would be required to undertake the assessment surveys and workshops, and appealed to donors to support the overall process, and the need for diverse partnerships with organizations.

50. As an initial step, FAO, in consultation with stakeholders, designed a questionnaire to assess national plant breeding and biotechnology capacity. Pilot-testing of the questionnaire was carried out in Venezuela and Egypt, and an information validation meeting was organized in Venezuela taking advantage of a local plant breeding and biotechnology conference. The questionnaire used in the pilot-testing was endorsed by national stakeholders as a useful mechanism to gather information on resource allocation trends, and for identification of national strengths and gaps to guide national policies on sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

51. During the first part of 2004, a survey was carried out in 11 countries in Africa. In June 2004, in collaboration with International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), a workshop for results reporting and strategy design for strengthening national capacity was organized as a follow-up. Currently, there are surveys being carried out in another ten countries in Africa, two in Asia, one in Latin America and one in Europe.

52. In addition to the plant breeding and applied biotechnology assessment strategy, and in order to complement it, FAO has initiated some specific training to strengthen capacity to allocate resources and to use biotechnologies in targeted African countries. For example, a training programme on plant breeding resource allocation, supported by the Italian Government, will be carried out in October 2004, in Italy, targeting five Sub-Saharan countries. Two training programmes in micro-propagation are scheduled to take place in West Africa in 2004. The Rockefeller Foundation is supporting an important new plant breeding training effort for 50

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<sup>39</sup> CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/03/2.

African scientists, in partnership with the University of Natal, Cornell University, and other institutions. The CGIAR is continuing its training activities in applied plant breeding as well, but with less emphasis than 15 years ago. A full assessment of ongoing training programmes on plant breeding and applied biotechnology is needed, including identifying opportunities to foster linkages among initiatives.

53. While FAO has provided resources from its Regular Programme Budget to strengthen national plant breeding, including participatory approaches, and benefited from extra-budgetary resources, it is clear that to fully develop all proposed elements to assess and strengthen national plant breeding and biotechnology capacity and to ensure their role in the implementation of both the *Global Plan of Action* and the International Treaty, additional resources are needed.

54. In light of the follow up activities and the need for additional resources for continuation of work, the Commission may wish to:

- i) endorse the recommendations of the Working Group in relation to the process and follow up activities;
- ii) recommend that more countries participate in the survey; and
- iii) provide guidance on the mobilization of necessary financial resources and partnerships to enable undertaking of all necessary activities and appeal to donors to make more resources available, including to enable full assessment of ongoing training on plant breeding and applied biotechnology.

### **C. THE GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST**

55. The Interim Panel of Eminent Experts was set up by FAO and IPGRI (acting on behalf of the Future Harvest Centres of the CGIAR) to establish the Global Crop Diversity Trust. Since the Ninth Regular Session of the Commission, the Panel has met four times. A progress report was presented to the second Session of the Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources in November 2003. Following extensive consultations, the Constitution and Establishment Agreement of the Trust have been approved by the Interim Panel and distributed by the Director-General of FAO to all governments, inviting them to sign it. The Trust is expected to become a legal entity soon. Progress has also been made in establishing interim eligibility principles and criteria for allocating funds, regional and crop-based funding strategies, financial policies and mechanism, operating policies and procedures for the Trust, and raising funds. A full report of these developments will be made available to the *Second Meeting of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture acting as Interim Committee for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

## **IV. GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE COMMISSION**

56. At the end of text dealing with each of the items covered in this document, requests for guidance are addressed to the Commission. The Commission may also wish to express its views and make suggestions on any of the policies and activities covered in this document, to be taken into consideration in further work.

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**APPENDIX I: DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR THE FACILITATING MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
*GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION***

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**As noted in paragraph 17, FAO and IPGRI have made provision in the medium term, to be able to support these activities, up to US\$ 800,000.  
This is in addition to the extrabudgetary needs indicated in the table below.**

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES  (as agreed by the Working Group)	ACTION	TIMING  (all activities to start once agreed by the CGRFA)	FACILITATORS  (at present the Facilitating Mechanism partners are FAO and IPGRI)	INDICATIVE EXTRABUDGETARY NEEDS (US\$ '000)  2005-2006
1. Provide information on: i) sources and availability of financial, technical, material and information resources ii) linkages among stakeholders iii) donor and recipient priorities, roles and conditions iv) best practices and standards and procedures v) success stories vi) networking vii) plans, commitments, targets and indicators viii) other information about resources to implement the Plan (Activity A)	Develop a portal as an access point for such information. Provide information by other means when it cannot be obtained from the portal.	2006	FM partners	200

<b>OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES</b> <b>(as agreed by the Working Group)</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIMING</b> <b>(all activities to start once agreed by the CGRFA)</b>	<b>FACILITATORS</b> <b>(at present the Facilitating Mechanism partners are FAO and IPGRI)</b>	<b>INDICATIVE EXTRABUDGETARY NEEDS (US\$ '000) 2005-2006</b>
2. Facilitate and catalyze new partnerships to implement the Global Plan of Action  (Activity B)	Promote meetings and dialogue to create opportunities among a wide range of interests involving donors and recipients; international organizations; civil society organizations including farmers' organizations and foundations; plant breeders and the seed sector; and other private sector interests.	One meeting per year	FM partners	100
3. Facilitate awareness at all levels, of the roles and values of PGR in order to mainstream PGR. (Activity C)	Develop a strategy to enhance awareness of PGR, including identification of target audiences, opportunities and activities.	2006	FM partners	175
4. Develop options concerning the funding strategy of the International Treaty (Activity D)	Analyse and report on options to further support implementation of the <i>Global Plan of Action</i> , in the context of the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty.	Report periodically to meetings of the Governing Body.	FAO	25
5. Evaluate results achieved in 2005-2006	Submit interim report to the Inter-governmental Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources  Submit evaluation report to the Commission	WG-PGR meeting in 2005  CGRFA meeting in 2006	FM partners	0
<b>Subtotal, operational activities A-D</b>				500

<b>OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES</b> <b>(to be decided by the Commission)</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIMING</b> <b>(all activities to start once agreed by the CGRFA)</b>	<b>FACILITATORS</b> <b>(at present the Facilitating Mechanism partners are FAO and IPGRI)</b>	<b>INDICATIVE EXTRABUDGETARY NEEDS (US '000)</b> <b>2005-2006</b>
Assist stakeholders to develop project proposals and package proposals (Activity E)	Develop and package project proposals to: i) assess the status and implementation of the Global Plan of Action ii) identify needs and gaps iii) assist in setting milestones and targets iv) engage a wide range of stakeholders	Start if Commission agrees, and in response to requests from countries and stakeholders.	FM partners	200
<b>Grand Total, operational activities A-D and operational activity E</b>				700