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para la
Agricultura
y la
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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING ON THE EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PHASE OF THE NEW APPROACH FOR MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE *GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE UTILIZATION OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE*

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. The new approach for monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, as described in a number of documents before the Commission,¹ was tested and successfully implemented during 2003 and 2004 in Cuba, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. The approach was also evaluated in Germany. In view of the positive early results observed in these countries, the new monitoring approach was also initiated in Mali, the Philippines and Uzbekistan, in 2004.

2. In line with the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture at its Second Session,² a *Meeting on the Evaluation of the Pilot Phase of the New Approach for Monitoring the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action* was convened by FAO, in collaboration with IPGRI, at FAO Headquarters in Rome on 5-7 May, 2004. It brought together national coordinators from most of these countries that either had completed testing or had made progress in implementing the new monitoring approach, as well as IPGRI and FAO staff that has been directly involved with these activities. The list of participants is provided in *Appendix I*.

3. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the results of the in-country pilot testing, refine the indicators and reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, fine-tune the overall process for establishing national information-sharing mechanisms, and prepare recommendations for the rolling-out of the new monitoring approach to all countries.

4. Presentations were also made to update participants about related plant genetic resources initiatives: the *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, preparations for the *Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, the Global Crop Diversity Trust, establishment of the Facilitating Mechanism to Implement the *Global Plan of Action*, seed and plant breeding networks, and a survey of national plant breeding capacities.

5. This report summarizes the discussions and the recommendations of participants with regard to the indicators and reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* (paras. 8-13), the process for establishing national information-sharing mechanisms (paras. 14-17), the computer application for gathering and exchanging information

¹ CGRFA/WG-PGR-1/01/3 *Monitoring the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*;

CGRFA-9/02/7 *Monitoring the Implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*;

CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/03/4 *Progress Report on Monitoring the Implementation of the Global Plan Of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*; and

CGRFA-10/04/5 *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* (paras. 19-22).

² CGRFA/WG-PGR-2/03/REPORT para. 24.

on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* (paras. 18-22) and the application of the new monitoring approach on a world-wide scale (paras. 23-26).

2. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

6. Following presentations on the process in pilot countries, which led in every case to the establishment of National Information Sharing Mechanisms on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, country representatives discussed their practical experience in the monitoring process, critically reviewed the indicators, the reporting format, the guidelines and the computer application, and suggested improvements.

7. Overall, the new monitoring approach was successfully implemented in all the countries in the first batch of testes. The countries that initiated the process in 2004 were not yet able to report in detail. This country-driven process has seen a high degree of participation from a wide range of national stakeholders, who provided information on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* and the status of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in their own countries, and contributed to a clearer understanding of developments since the adoption of the *Plan* in 1996.

3. REFINEMENT OF THE INDICATORS AND REPORTING FORMAT FOR MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE *GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION*

8. The indicators and reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, which were presented to the Ninth Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture,³ were tested during the pilot phase and revised indicators and a revised reporting format were agreed.⁴

9. Country representatives considered that, in general terms, the level of detail and the structure of the indicators and reporting format had allowed meaningful analysis of the status of implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* in their countries. Their use will, over time, provide for effective monitoring of progress and trends, facilitating the establishment of a sound national information system on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

10. The changes proposed to the indicators and reporting format aimed mainly at improving the clarity of the questionnaire and eliminating redundancies and duplications.

11. The revised reporting format has 14% fewer questions, for a total of 138 questions. This includes 20 open-ended questions, not linked to any indicator, inviting general comments for each priority activity area of the *Global Plan of Action*.

12. Of the 118 questions linked to individual indicators,

- 98 questions are linked to core indicators, 48 of which are directed to National Focal Point and 50 to Stakeholders, and
- 20 questions are linked to complementary indicators, 8 of which are directed to National Focal Point and 12 to Stakeholders.

13. Major changes to the tested Reporting Format include:

- i. Formulation of a new integrated question on training.

³ CGRFA-9/02/Inf.2 *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*

⁴ CGRFA-10/04/Inf.5 *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*

- ii. Merging two or more questions into one.
- iii. Conversion of open-ended questions into multiple choice questions.
- iv. Conversion of open-ended questions on policies and strategic frameworks into tabular questions which now request to create a link to relevant references.

4. PROCESS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL INFORMATION SHARING MECHANISMS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE *GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION*

14. The process for the involvement of national stakeholders and the establishment of the National Information Sharing Mechanism on the implementation of the *Plan*, as provided for in the guidelines, was successfully applied during the pilot testing phase with a few country-specific adjustments.

15. Figure 1 highlights the main steps of the process, which starts with the identification of stakeholders, some of whom will be part of the Programme Management Committee. Initial and final steps of the process imply policy decisions, and therefore require the contribution of relevant officials from the coordinating and participating organizations. These steps are listed in the upper part of Figure 1. The remaining steps require scientific and technical expertise from both the national coordinator and participating stakeholders (as listed in the lower half of Figure 1).

16. Country representatives stressed the importance of involving high-level decision-makers, and getting their commitment to the monitoring process from the beginning, in order to institutionalize the process and ensure its future sustainability. There was general agreement that the involvement of active, reliable and responsible stakeholders is essential to successfully conduct the monitoring process. Existing national networks or other institutional arrangements, such as existing National Committees on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, could help substantially. It is also very important that the National Focal Point, as an institution, be able to provide technical assistance to stakeholders during the entire process, particularly during the installation and use of the computer application.

17. It was recognized that in the world-wide application of the new monitoring approach, the process summarized in Figure 1 may need to be adjusted and modified in the light of the size of the country, and the number of stakeholders to be involved, as well as of institutions and information infrastructures which may be able to supply the information required, thereby avoiding duplication.



Figure 1. Schematic diagram of the process at national level for the establishment of the National Information Sharing Mechanism on the Implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.

5. THE COMPUTER APPLICATION FOR GATHERING AND EXCHANGING INFORMATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE *GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION*

18. Participants unanimously agreed that the computer application for gathering and exchanging information, developed by FAO in close consultation with IPGRI, is well structured and serves the purpose for which it has been developed.

19. Computer hardware requirements for running the application may in some cases represent a constraint for its utilization by stakeholders.⁵ However, the experience in the pilot countries showed that, with minor upgrades of computer hardware components for some participating stakeholders, this constraint could be overcome.

20. Options for enhancing the system and making it easier to use were also discussed. Recommendations highlighted the importance of emphasizing the utilization of the information gathered, through the computer application, in order to further meet users' needs.

21. Options discussed included the development of (a) features for facilitating information analysis, (b) functions for spell checking, (c) modules for the interactive and guided translation of the indicators and reporting format and (d) improving troubleshooting for errors. Considering cost and impact, the group prioritized the first of these options. In this regard it was recommended to develop a feature for exporting the information provided by stakeholders for individual priority activity areas of the *Plan*, or individual indicators into a spreadsheet format (e.g. Microsoft Excel).

22. Other enhancements suggested by country representatives included:

- Development of a "help" procedure to indicate whether or not a column of a table is mandatory, and the type of input required; and
- Modification of the existing data-entry procedure for stakeholders from countries whose interface works in both the local language and in English. The modified procedure would allow stakeholders to record both the local language text and the English translation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

23. The Meeting asked FAO to adjust the indicators and reporting format in the light of the discussions and recommended to submit them to the Tenth Regular Session of the Commission for adoption and roll-out to all countries.

24. The guidelines and the computer application developed by FAO and IPGRI for the implementation of the new monitoring approach should also be adjusted in line with the recommendations and made available to all the countries.

25. In view of the considerable capacity building needs implied by the world-wide roll-out of the new monitoring approach, country representatives recommended taking advantage of the expertise developed during the pilot phase to assist neighbouring countries.

26. The meeting agreed that provisions for upgrading hardware computer components for some of the participating national stakeholders in developing countries should be budgeted when rolling out the new monitoring approach.

⁵ A Pentium III or equivalent computer with 256 MB of RAM and 400 MB of free space is needed, with an average retail price of about 600 US\$.

APPENDIX

Meeting on the Evaluation of the Pilot Phase of the New Approach for Monitoring the Implementation of the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, 5-7 May 2004

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