

November 2005



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**COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ACTING AS INTERIM COMMITTEE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON
PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**Open-Ended Working Group on the Rules of Procedure and the Financial Rules of the
Governing Body, Compliance, and the Funding Strategy**

Rome, 14 – 17 December 2005

**FACILITATING FLOWS OF RESOURCES USING THE FACILITATING
MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Contracting Parties of the *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* undertake “to implement a funding strategy for the implementation of this Treaty”.¹ The objectives of the Funding Strategy are “to enhance the availability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the provision of financial resources to implement activities under this Treaty”.² The Treaty provides that its Governing Body will “adopt, at its first session, and periodically review the funding strategy for the implementation of this Treaty, in accordance with the provisions of Article 18”.³

2. In preparing for this process, the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, acting as Interim Committee for the Treaty, discussed, at its second session, the document, *Preparation for Consideration by the Governing Body of the Funding Strategy for the Treaty*⁴. This document identified some of the main elements that could be considered for the preparation of the Funding Strategy, the possible mechanisms for the mobilization of resources, including through the Global Crop Diversity Trust, and the use of those resources under the Funding Strategy. It described, in particular, the various roles that the Treaty provides for the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Global Plan of Action)*, in relation to the Funding Strategy and in this context, it introduced the Facilitating Mechanism for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* as a potential tool.

3. In considering that document, the Interim Committee noted the need for further analysis of the issues relating to the Funding Strategy, and requested its Secretariat to conduct a study on the nature, criteria and possible contents of the Funding Strategy for the International Treaty⁵. The Interim Committee further decided that the draft Funding Strategy should be forwarded to an Open-ended Working Group prior to being submitted to the Governing Body, for consideration at its first session.

4. This document focusses on the potential contribution of the Facilitating Mechanism for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* to the development and implementation of the Funding Strategy, as one of the elements to be considered for the preparation of the Funding Strategy for the implementation of the Treaty.

II. THE FUNDING STRATEGY AND THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

5. The relationship between the *Global Plan of Action* and the Funding Strategy was analysed for consideration by Interim Committee of the Treaty at its second session.⁶ This section builds on that analysis.

6. The *Global Plan of Action* was adopted in 1996 at the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources. It emphasized that “the follow-up processes call for action at local, national and international levels and should involve all parties which were associated with [its] preparation”.

7. The *Global Plan of Action* is now a supporting component of the Treaty. Its Article 14 reads as follows:

¹ Article 18.1.

² Article 18.2.

³ Article 19.3c.

⁴ CGRFA/MIC-2/04/4.

⁵ CGRFA/MIC-2/04/REP.

⁶ CGRFA/MIC-2/04/4, para. 18-25.

“Recognizing that the rolling Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is important to this Treaty, Contracting Parties should promote its effective implementation, including through national actions and, as appropriate, international cooperation to provide a coherent framework, *inter alia*, for capacity-building, technology transfer and exchange of information, taking into account the provisions of Article 13”.

8. In Article 18, Financial Resources, the Governing Body shall establish a target for the Funding Strategy that will take into account the *Global Plan of Action*, in order to mobilize funding for priority activities, plans and programmes, in particular in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.⁷

9. In Article 13, Benefit-sharing in the Multilateral System, Contracting Parties agree that benefits arising from the use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture from the Multilateral System shall be shared, “taking into account the priority activity areas in the rolling Global Plan of Action”.⁸

10. The Treaty establishes that “The Contracting Parties recognize that the ability to fully implement the Global Plan of Action, in particular of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, will depend largely upon the effective implementation of Article 13 and of the funding strategy”.⁹

11. In 1996, member countries at the Leipzig Conference agreed that “overall progress in the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* and of the related follow-up processes would be monitored and guided by the national governments and other members of FAO, through the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture”.¹⁰ Since then the Commission has considered a number of progress reports on implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, is currently guiding the new approach for monitoring its implementation, and has adopted a list of indicators for monitoring and a reporting format to be used at national level.

12. The most recent progress report on implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* showed that many countries recognised the *Global Plan of Action* as the basis for their national programmes and plans on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Yet, in spite of international cooperation efforts, lack of sufficient funding is leading to strong differences among countries and regions in the progress achieved.¹¹ At its Tenth Regular Session in 2004, the Commission decided on the establishment of a Facilitating Mechanism for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.

III. THE FACILITATING MECHANISM FOR IMPLEMENTING THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

13. At its Ninth Regular Session in 2002, the Commission considered a proposal to establish a Facilitating Mechanism for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*. The Commission stressed that “that the implementation of the *Plan* should be country-driven, but efforts should also 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

⁷ Article 18.3.

⁸ Article 13.2.

⁹ Article 13.5.

¹⁰ ITCPCR/96/REP para. 21.

¹¹ CGRFA-10/04/Inf.6.

resources management, plant breeding and seed sector, and networking, and facilitating communication with international organizations and donors”.¹²

14. At its Tenth Regular Session in 2004, the Commission discussed the establishment within FAO of the Facilitating Mechanism for the Implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, noting the great need to build countries’ capacities to implement the *Plan*. The Commission agreed that the objective of the Facilitating Mechanism should be to facilitate the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, and to encourage the mobilization of technical and financial resources to do so.

15. The Commission supported the objective, operational principles, activities, and operational structure of the Facilitating Mechanism, as given in an appendix to the report of the session.¹³ The Facilitating Mechanism should provide information on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, facilitate and catalyze new partnerships, facilitate awareness at all levels of the roles and values of plant genetic resources and assist stakeholders in the development and packaging of project proposals. The Facilitating Mechanism should, *inter alia*, utilize the results of monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* to assist in identifying gaps and priorities in its implementation.

16. The operational structure, supported by the Commission, specifies that the Commission and its Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources (WG-PGR) will provide overall guidance to the Facilitating Mechanism. The Facilitating Mechanism should be hosted by FAO and operated in partnership with the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) in a way that attracts and accommodates other international organizations to become partners, as agreed by the Commission. The current partners are FAO, IPGRI and the Global Forum for Agricultural Research.

17. A draft operational plan was proposed¹⁴, which identified regular budget allocations and extra-budgetary resources needed to carry out proposed activities. It has not yet proven possible for FAO to raise the extra-budgetary resources required, but with the limited resources available, FAO has started, in collaboration with its partners, the implementation of selected activities. A meeting of the partners of the Facilitating Mechanism took place in June 2005 to identify concrete activities to be carried out, supported by their regular budget funding. Extra-budgetary resources received from Germany have allowed work to start on the development of an information portal to carry out Activity a) agreed by the Commission.¹⁵ Additional extra-budgetary resources are required to begin implementation of the other activities adopted by the Commission.

IV. POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE FACILITATING MECHANISM TO THE FUNDING STRATEGY OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY

18. At its Ninth Regular Session, the Commission “considered that renewed efforts to promote implementation of the *Plan*, through the development of the facilitating mechanism, should build upon the momentum created by the adoption of the Treaty. 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. The experience gained would facilitate implementation of the Treaty, on its entry into force, and, as appropriate, could contribute to the development of its funding strategy. However, the Commission noted that there should be no

¹² CGRFA-9/02/REP, *Report of the Ninth Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, para.27.

¹³ Appendix F on the “Objective, operational principles, activities and operational structure of the Facilitating Mechanism” is annexed to this information document, see Annex 1.

¹⁴ See CGRFA-10/04/5, Appendix I.

¹⁵ Activity a) is described in Annex 1.

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” .¹⁶

19. At its Tenth Session, the Commission requested the Inter-governmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to “Identify and advise on activities undertaken by FAO, including through its Commission, to support the work of the Governing Body of the International Treaty, in relation to the Supporting Components of the Treaty, in order to move the process forward in a cost effective and rational manner. ...” In this context, the Inter-governmental Technical Working Group, which met on 26 to 28 October 2005, noted that the success of the Facilitating Mechanism for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* will depend on its capacity to carry out its activities in a way that complements and does not overlap with implementation of the International Treaty, in the context of the relationship between the Facilitating Mechanism and the International Treaty. The Working Group recommended that:

- a) The Facilitating Mechanism should report periodically on its activities to the Commission and its Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The reports should include information about priorities for action that have been identified by stakeholders, and project proposals developed with the assistance and coordination of the Facilitating Mechanism upon request from stakeholders;
- b) On this basis, the Commission could propose priorities to the Governing Body of the International Treaty for consideration as appropriate under the Treaty’s Funding Strategy; and
- c) The Facilitating Mechanism should take into account priorities established and activities carried out by the Governing Body under the Funding Strategy.¹⁷

20. The operational principles of the Facilitating Mechanism state that overall guidance of the Facilitating Mechanism will be provided by the Commission. Although membership of the Commission and the Treaty differ, recommendations made by the Commission on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, in particular in relation to gaps, constraints and identification of common priorities, may be of great relevance for the decision-making process in the implementation of the Treaty’s Funding Strategy and the establishment of targets for funding.

21. Once fully operative, specific activities carried out by the Facilitating Mechanism under this general operative framework may assist the Governing Body in the future development of policy, and criteria for priority activities, plans and programmes under the Funding Strategy, in the light, in particular, of the *Global Plan of Action*. They may also assist in the development of a coherent framework for capacity-building, technology transfer and the exchange of information.

22. With the objective of facilitating the work of the Governing Body in implementing the Funding Strategy and contributing to the effective implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, the Open-ended Working Group may wish to examine whether the Governing Body of the Treaty should recognize the Facilitating Mechanism as a potential source of valuable information for the development of the Funding Strategy; express support to the cooperation process between the Commission and the Governing Body of the Treaty in relation to the Facilitating Mechanism, as stated in paragraph 19 above; and consider the establishment of such cooperation in the wider framework of cooperation between the Commission and the Governing Body of the Treaty. The Open-ended Working Group may wish to consider these issues in the context of document *Development of the Funding Strategy for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.¹⁸

¹⁶ CGRFA-9/02/REP, para.29.

¹⁷ CGRFA/WG-PGR-3/05/REPORT, para.12.

¹⁸ CGRFA/IC/OWG-1/05/7.

OBJECTIVE, OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES, ACTIVITIES AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE FACILITATING MECHANISM¹⁹

Objective

To facilitate the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* and to encourage the mobilization of technical and financial resources to do so.

Operational principles

The Facilitating Mechanism:

- a) must add value to existing activities by identifying new opportunities and avoiding duplication of efforts;
- b) should promote innovative partnerships and creative solutions to obstacles to *Global Plan of Action* implementation;
- c) should facilitate the engagement of more diverse interests in the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* in order to catalyze the involvement and resources of new partners;
- d) should promote and assist collaboration and coordination of related activities among those engaged in the implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and other relevant international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- e) shall operate in accordance with national sovereignty, through National Focal Points where desired by governments, and encouraging national level ownership of implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*. It shall respond to requests from countries;
- f) should operate in such a manner that external resources are focused on a country's priority needs and complement a country's own investments in the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* in accordance with national capacities;
- g) should utilize the results of monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* to assist in identifying gaps and priorities in that implementation;
- h) must operate in a transparent manner;
- i) should assist in promoting linkages between plant genetic resources conservation and utilization and sustainable development; and
- j) should promote the involvement of stakeholders, including farmers, the plant breeding sector and the seed sector, in the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.

Activities of the Facilitating Mechanism

The Facilitating Mechanism should:

- a) provide information on:
 - i. sources and availability of financial, technical, material and information resources;
 - ii. linkages among stakeholders;

¹⁹ Excerpted from the *Report of the Tenth Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, Rome, Italy, 8 – 12 November 2004, document CGRFA-10/04/REP, Appendix F.

- 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; and
 - viii. any other information regarding resources necessary to implement the *Global Plan of Action*.
- b) facilitate and catalyze new partnerships to implement the *Global Plan of Action* by promoting 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.
 - c) facilitate awareness at all levels, of the roles and values of plant genetic resources in order to mainstream plant genetic resources. Target audiences should be carefully identified
 - d) assist stakeholders, upon request, to develop, in a manner that avoids conflict of interest, project proposals and package proposals to enhance their quality, including to facilitate action planning at the wider level (by crops, thematic areas, and/or regions) to:
 - i. assess the status and implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*
 - ii. identify need and gaps;
 - iii. assist in setting milestones and targets; and
 - iv. engage a wide-range of stakeholders.

Operational Structure

- a) The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and its Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources will provide overall guidance to the Facilitating Mechanism;
- b) The Facilitating Mechanism should be hosted by FAO and operated in partnership with IPGRI in a way that attracts and accommodates other international organizations to become partners, as agreed by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- c) The operational procedures should enable and encourage the direction of financial and other resources to support the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*;
- d) The operational structure should be designed to enable the Facilitating Mechanism to take greatest advantage of the available technical capacity within FAO and IPGRI, as well as agreed partners;

The operational structure should encourage the participation of a wide range of stakeholders.