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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND PROGRAMME FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

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**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
AND PROGRAMME FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document reviews progress to date (September 1994) in the implementation of the "International Conference and Programme for Plant Genetic Resources" (ICPPGR). It has been prepared by the Secretariat of the ICPPGR -- a multi-donor trust fund project¹ established by FAO in response to the request of the FAO Conference to convene the "Fourth International Technical Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources".²

2. The aim of the ICPPGR is to develop, through a participatory, country-driven process, a first Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, and a first, costed, Global Plan of Action for the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, to be presented for adoption at the Fourth International Technical Conference in June 1996. Agenda 21, of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also calls for the preparation and adoption of such a report, and global plan of action, at the Fourth International Technical Conference.

II. BACKGROUND

II.1 *Genesis of the ICPPGR—the implementation of Farmers' Rights, and making the Global System more fully operational.*

3. The convening of a Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources³ was first proposed by the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources at its Fourth Session, and endorsed by the FAO Conference at its Twenty-sixth Session, in 1991.

4. At its Fourth Session, the Commission agreed that Farmers' Rights⁴ would be implemented through an international fund to support plant genetic resource conservation and utilization, especially in developing countries, and that the policies, programmes and

¹ Project number : GCP/INT/573/MUL.

² Reports of the Conference of FAO: C91/REP, para 113 and C93/REP, para 110.

³ A series of International Technical Conferences on Plant Genetic Resources have been convened by FAO, in cooperation with other Organizations, to facilitate technical discussions among scientists, and to create awareness about plant genetic resources issues among policy-makers at national and international levels. The first such Conference took place in 1967, and some of its important resolutions were subsequently adopted by the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, in Stockholm. The Second International Technical Conference, which was held in 1973, interpreted the resolutions of the Stockholm Conference in the context of plant genetic resources. The Third International Technical Conference, which took place in 1981, catalyzed the development of the FAO Global System for the Conservation and Use of Plant Genetic Resources.

⁴ The concept of Farmers' Rights was agreed by FAO Conference in Resolution 5/89 (the second annex to the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources), as "rights arising from the past, present and future contributions of farmers in conserving, improving and making available plant genetic resources". The rights were vested in the International Community, as trustee, in order to assist farmers in the protection and conservation of their plant genetic resources, and to allow farmers, their communities and countries to participate fully in the benefits derived from the improved use of plant genetic resources.

priorities of the fund would be determined through the Commission. This was endorsed by FAO Conference, through resolution 3/91. The Commission also agreed that the implementation of Farmers' Rights, through the international fund, should be based on a scientifically sound Global Plan of Action. It therefore recommended that FAO convene the Fourth International Technical Conference, and, through the preparatory process, develop the first Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, and the first Global Plan of Action.

5. The Commission noted that the preparation of the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources and Global Plan of Action would assist it in exercising the coordinating and monitoring roles provided for in its mandate. The Fifth Session of the Commission, in April 1993, noted that the ICPPGR would "make the Global System for the Conservation and Use of Plant Genetic Resources⁵ fully operational".

6. The importance of plant genetic resources was recognized at UNCED. In particular, chapter 14 of Agenda 21 includes a programme area on the "conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food and sustainable agriculture", which contains programmes of action, at national and international levels. At the international level, Agenda 21 proposes actions, *inter alia*, to prepare periodic state of the world reports on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and a rolling global cooperative plan of action on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture; and to promote the Fourth International Technical Conference, which would consider the first Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, and Plan of Action. Agenda 21 also calls for the realization of Farmers' Rights. At its Fifth Session, the Commission noted that the ICPPGR would "transform the relevant parts of the UNCED process (including Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biological Diversity) into a costed Global Plan of Action, based on the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources".

II.2 *Relationship of the ICPPGR to the revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity*

7. FAO Conference Resolution 7/93 calls for the revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity. At the Fifth Session of the Commission, there was agreement that the Global Plan of Action and Revised Undertaking be presented to the Fourth International Technical Conference. It was therefore recommended that the Conference be attended at a high level.⁶

8. The Undertaking deals with a broad set of issues including access to, and the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources. The development of a realistic and costed Global Plan of Action must necessarily consider such topics. The renegotiation of the Undertaking, and the development of a Global Plan of Action, are understood to be complementary, and part of a larger process aimed at producing a comprehensive package for governments to consider formally.

5 The Global System, being developed by FAO, has the objectives of promoting the conservation, the availability and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for present and future generations, by providing a flexible framework for sharing the benefits and burdens. See also Document CPGR-Ex1/94/3.

6 CPGR/93/Rep, para 81.

9. FAO Conference Resolution 7/93 expressed the hope that the revision process be concluded in time for the International Technical Conference and suggested that the outcome be submitted to that Conference. In line with the recommendations of the Commission at its Fifth Session,⁷ the FAO Conference "noted that the revision of the Undertaking and other preparations for the Fourth Technical Conference, (...) should be regarded as integral parts of one process", to be carried out under the guidance of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources and its Working Group. It was further noted that they were major components of FAO's contribution to, and role in, implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity.

10. The Technical Conference will also contribute to the implementation of Resolution 3 of the Nairobi Final Act of the Conference for the Adoption of the Agreed Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity, of 22 May 1992, which stressed "the need to seek solutions to outstanding matters concerning Plant Genetic Resources", in particular, the questions of access to *ex situ* collections not acquired in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Farmers' Rights, within the FAO Global System.⁸

III. THE AIMS AND STRATEGY OF THE ICPPGR

III.1 *Aims and Strategy*

11. The Twenty-seventh Session of the FAO Conference, in November 1993, strongly emphasized the importance of the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, and endorsed its aims and strategy, as had the Fifth Session of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources. These aims and strategy are set out below.

12. The ICPPGR aims to develop consensus and commitment from countries, and from all relevant sectors, for the conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and their use in sustainable development, and, in particular:

- (i) to catalyze action at the country level to promote capacity building, including increased communication and access to information, improved planning and evaluation, the identification of problems and emergency needs, the formulation of projects to address such needs, and the encouragement of regional cooperation and initiatives;
- (ii) to describe, through the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, the current situation of plant genetic resources, and identify gaps and needs and propose priorities for action; and
- (iii) to secure agreement on a Global Plan of Action for plant genetic resources, as it emanates from the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, building upon the outline plan of action of Agenda 21, and for its financing, through an International Fund and other mechanisms, in line with FAO Conference Resolutions 5/89 and 3/91.

13. As the Commission and the FAO Conference have emphasized, the ICPPGR project will support a country-driven process for formulating a concrete Global Plan of Action. This participatory approach is important in developing an innovative, yet practical plan, to which

⁷ CPGR/93/Rep, para 46.

⁸ Progress report on the ICPPGR, CPGR/WG/94/5.

all countries can feel fully committed. The ICPPGR is designed to result not only in countries endorsing a Global Plan of Action, but also in their committing themselves to its timely implementation, with support from both the scientific and political communities.

14. As stated in its fifth session,⁹ the Commission and its Working Group will provide policy guidance to the process, and a draft Global Plan of Action will be reviewed at a session of the Commission.

III.2 *The Country-driven Consultative Process*

15. Full country participation in the country-driven process for formulating the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources and a concrete Global Plan of Action is critical, if real needs, as countries perceive them, are to be addressed by concrete solutions, in the context of the Global Plan of Action. The project has been designed to offer a number of opportunities for country input, including:

- (i) the preparation of Country Reports assessing the status of plant genetic resources in each country, focusing on needs, and gaps in institutional capacities for conserving and developing these resources, and
- (ii) a series of sub-regional and regional meetings, at which countries may present their reports, identify common problems, and explore possible solutions, which could be incorporated into the Global Plan of Action.

Countries also have the opportunity to make their views known, and provide information, through more informal channels, including during visits to countries by project staff.

III.2.1 *Preparation of Country Reports*

16. As an integral part of this country-driven approach, the crucial responsibility for producing country reports, in a timely fashion, and within the schedule established by the ICPPGR, lies with the countries themselves. The ICPPGR, in cooperation with IPGRI's regional offices, may be able to provide limited planning and technical assistance to countries in this work. Within the constraints of the project's budget, limited funds may also be available partially to defray in-country expenses for producing Country Reports.

17. In their Country Reports, countries will assess the status of their plant genetic resources, describe their activities for their conservation and utilization, and identify gaps, needs and priorities. The reports will be a major input to the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, and the first Global Plan of Action. "Introductory Guidelines" on the scope of the reports, and on their preparation, were therefore prepared by the Secretariat, and distributed under cover of the Circular State Letter of 30 September 1994 from the Director-General. The involvement of all relevant ministries and government departments, as well as universities, research institutes, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and farmers' organizations, is encouraged. The establishment of a permanent or *ad hoc* National Committee for Plant Genetic Resources is promoted, where this does not already exist.

⁹ CPGR/93/Rep, para 81.

III.2.2 *Sub-regional Meetings and the Preparation of Sub-regional Syntheses*

18. Countries will also have the major responsibility for organizing their input into, and ensuring their participation in, the sub-regional and regional meetings. Particular responsibilities will also need to be assumed by countries hosting sub-regional and regional meetings.

19. The main conclusions arising from Country Reports will be discussed at the sub-regional meetings, and will then be used in elaborating the Report on the State of the World's Genetic Resources, and the Global Plan of Action. In their presentations to sub-regional meetings, countries will be invited to focus on topics in which they have particular interest, experience or expertise, which might be of interest to the sub-region as a whole. Institutions and individual experts from the Region will also be invited to present studies. In this way, a genuine exchange of expertise and experiences will be achieved. Synthesis reports will then be developed, drawing on the assessments contained in the Country Reports, and the discussions at, and conclusions of, the sub-regional meetings, as well as on other cross-cutting studies commissioned by, or made available to, the project.

20. Sub-regions have been defined on the basis of common agro-ecological conditions taking into account common political and economic groupings. Most encompass one of the classical Centres of Diversity identified by the Russian scientist, N.I. Vavilov. Depending on the availability of funding, meetings will be organized for each sub-region, with the support of a host country or institution, though, in some cases, sub-regions may be combined, and a regional meeting held. However, at current levels of donor commitment to the project, insufficient funds exist to support meetings in all sub-regions, thus diminishing this particular opportunity for country participation, and input to the process.

III.3 *The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*

21. The Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources will describe the current situation of plant genetic resources, at the global level, and identify the needs for the conservation and sustainable utilization, as well as emergency situations. In particular, the Report will:

- (i) assess the present state of genetic diversity, the degree of genetic erosion, and the current coverage and status of the *in-situ* and *ex situ* conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. The Report will build upon assessments by country and by sub-region, and, to the extent feasible, by crop group;
- (ii) identify major constraints to plant genetic resources conservation, utilization and exchange;
- (iii) evaluate the extent to which collections are used and developed, and identify problems which hinder their full utilization for plant breeding;
- (iv) assess national and regional capabilities for the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, in terms of human resources, institutional structures, and the methodologies employed;
- (v) examine areas of special interest to the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, such as informatics, new

biotechnologies, local technologies, and issues such as on-farm conservation, and the need for new approaches to plant breeding which maintain diversity in production systems; and

- (vi) identify technologies appropriate for meeting the special needs of the developing countries, and assess the current state and pattern of technology transfer in plant genetic resources.

22. The scope of the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources encompasses plants of social and economic interest, especially for agriculture and forestry. The report will concentrate on domesticated crop species and their wild relatives, forest species of current or potential economic value, and promising species of plants which could be developed into new crops. It will give balanced attention to new, as well as to traditional and indigenous technologies. A static "inventory" approach will be avoided, by emphasizing existing problems and emergencies at national, regional and global levels. The report will serve as a bench-mark of the current situation, and form the basis on which the Global Plan of Action will be developed.

23. The main inputs into the process leading to the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources will be:

- (i) existing background information, complemented by information provided in questionnaires completed by countries, and compiled and analyzed by the FAO Plant Production and Protection Division, the Forest Resources Division, and the ICPPGR Secretariat;
- (ii) country reports to be submitted by individual countries;
- (iii) case-studies and issue-analysis papers to be identified and compiled by the Secretariat of the ICPPGR;
- (iv) the results of the sub-regional and regional meetings;
- (v) information obtained and analysed by the project Secretariat, through contacts and discussions with governments, and relevant organizations; and
- (vi) inputs coming from complementary activities undertaken by governments, institutions, non-governmental organizations, and others, in support of the ICPPGR process.

III.4 *The Global Plan of Action*

24. The Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources will complement and draw upon the Report on the State on the World's Plant Genetic Resources. Building upon the skeleton programme of action in Agenda 21, it will:

- (i) propose policies and strategies for the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture at the national, regional and global levels, with particular attention to the linkages between conservation programmes, and utilization capabilities and programmes;
- (ii) assist countries in elaborating plans or programmes of priority action for conservation activities at the national level;

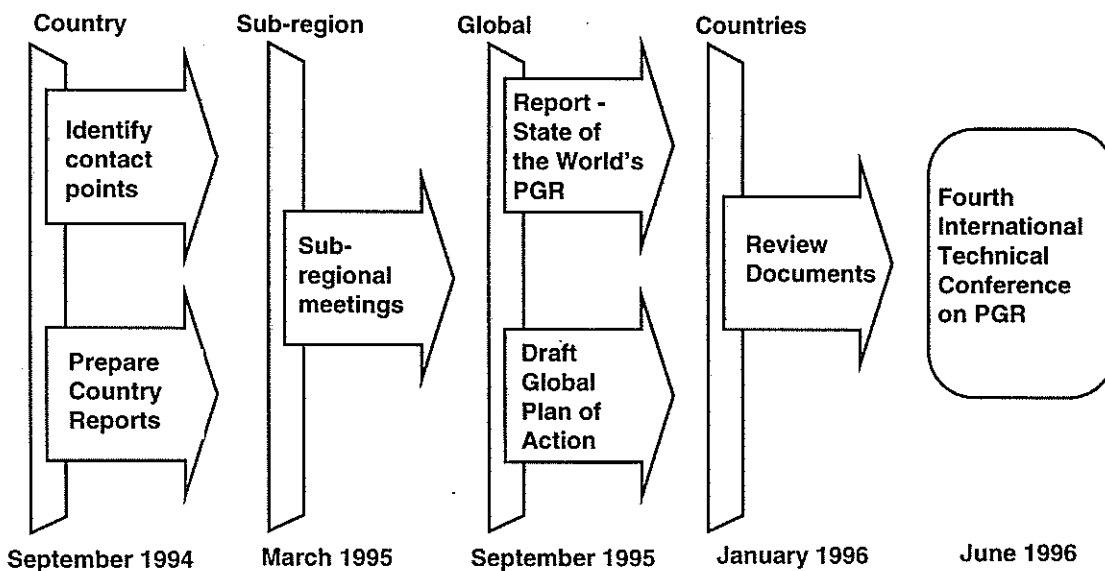
- (iii) assist countries in strengthening national capabilities for utilizing plant genetic resources, and their national plant breeding and seed production capacities;
- (iv) propose appropriate and feasible measures to make the Global System for Plant Genetic Resources more effective; and
- (v) include costed programmes, projects and activities, to be financed by an International Fund and other mechanisms.

III.5 *Collaboration with Relevant International Institutions and Organizations*

25. As part of this consensus-building approach and as agreed by the Commission,¹⁰ the ICPPGR will invite the participation of all relevant organizations and institutions dealing with *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation, as well as with the sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources, especially the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and its International Agricultural Research Centres, (particularly IPGRI), UNEP, the governing body of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and relevant non-governmental organizations. In relation to the costing of the Global Plan of Action and its component projects, cooperation will be sought with the World Bank, with other multilateral funding agencies, and with the GEF. Furthermore, through the creation of a wide-ranging participatory process, the ICPPGR Secretariat will play an important role as a catalyst and facilitator, in encouraging the involvement of others.

III.6 *The Time Frame*

26. The following chart summarizes the main steps of the process, with a timetable for its implementation as currently envisaged by the ICPPGR Secretariat. It must be stressed that this time-frame is critically dependent upon the country-driven process, and on countries meeting the various deadlines.



10 CPGR/93/Rep, para 80.

IV PROGRESS REPORT

IV.1 *Establishment of the Project Secretariat*

27. At the time of the last report to the Working Group, in May 1994, the ICPPGR Secretariat consisted of one professional staff member (the Project Manager) officially appointed to the position in April 1994, and two general service staff. The most immediate task then facing the Project Manager was to identify, recruit and incorporate additional staff into the project Secretariat, and to establish the requisite administrative capacity to operate effectively and efficiently. These were prerequisites for initiating substantial project activities. The task of constituting the Secretariat was complicated by the fact that available and committed funds were not then sufficient to initiate recruitment of all staff specified in the Project Document. Thus, the consolidation of positions, the redefinitions of terms of reference, and a prioritizing and sequencing of staff hiring were made necessary, while the search for additional funds continued. This resulted in both a reduction in total staffing, and a delay in hiring.

28. FAO can report substantial progress in the implementation of the ICPPGR since its report to the Working Group, in May. Three professional staff have joined the Secretariat, in May, August and October. A fourth professional is at an advanced stage of recruitment. It is envisaged that the Secretariat will be fully established before the end of 1994, and that it will comprise a total of seven professional officers (including two associate professional officers provided by countries - see para 50 - and one professional officer seconded from the Regular Programme), as well as three general service staff (supported through project funds).

29. When fully established, the Secretariat will be regionally balanced and have the capability to operate in all five official languages of the Organization, as well as in several other major African, Asian and European languages. It will also contain staff with formal academic expertise in agronomy, genetics, genetic resource conservation, plant breeding, and plant genetic resources policy questions .

30. An internal Project Task Force composed of staff representing the relevant FAO departments has been established, to facilitate communication and coordination. In addition, the Assistant Director-General, Agriculture Department, has been empowered by the Director-General to call *ad hoc* coordination meetings with other Departments and with IPGRI when needed.

IV.2 *Initiation of Country and Regional Contacts*

IV.2.1 *Establishment of Country Contact Points*

31. Through his Circular State Letter of 30 September 1994, the Director-General formally invited countries to participate in the ICPPGR, to nominate official contact points for the process, and to prepare Country Reports. The person or office designated as the contact point will serve as the main liaison with FAO regarding the Country Report, and the overall ICPPGR process. It is therefore crucially important that this contact point be competent to address the full range of scientific and policy issues involved in the process.

IV.2.2 *Regional Missions*

32. In order to introduce the ICPPGR to countries, establish practical links with national programmes, determine how best to facilitate the fullest possible national involvement in the ICPPGR, coordinate activities with IPGRI and other organizations, and make an initial

assessment of the situation of plant genetic resources in the various regions, project staff undertook a number of missions to various regions. In the process, contacts were established with a large number of national coordinators and chairs of national plant genetic resources committees, many of whom are expected to be designated as contact points, or be significantly involved in the ICPPGR process.

33. Since June 1994, project staff have visited Eastern and Southern Africa, the Middle East, East and South-East Asia, and Latin America and North America. In the course of this travel, staff attended regional plant genetic resources network meetings for East Asia (five member countries), and West Asia and North Africa (twenty member countries) as well as a network-related meeting in Latin America. The project manager attended the Nairobi meeting of the Inter-governmental Committee on the Convention on Biological Diversity in June, making contact with many delegations, and participating in an FAO workshop to inform delegates of FAO activities in the field of biological diversity, including the role of the ICPPGR. Other FAO staff, and IPGRI staff, have promoted the project in other regions, particularly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

34. Through these visits, the Project Secretariat has made initial contact with key actors—involvement in both science and policy—in many countries, to explain the process, discuss Country Report preparation, and identify major topics for discussion at the sub-regional meetings. In visits to over a dozen of national and regional genebanks and a number of plant breeding programmes in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, staff were able to assess the situation in the field, and have direct and detailed discussions with government scientists involved in daily plant genetic resources activities. Valuable information has been received, and some potential projects to meet urgent needs have been identified. Finally, close contact has been established with IPGRI regional offices and their staff in the course of the various missions.

IV.3 *Initiation of Country Reports*

35. As noted above, the Director-General has formally requested countries to prepare Country Reports, and "Introductory Guidelines for Country Reports" have been prepared, in close cooperation with relevant services in FAO as well as with IPGRI, and circulated by Circular State Letter, on 30 September 1994. In parallel to their formal distribution, the Guidelines, together with compendia of information in the FAO World Information and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources database (WIEWS/PGR), were circulated to coordinators of national plant genetic resources programmes. Several hundred copies of the Guidelines were also distributed to relevant individuals and organizations through international meetings, and during the visits of FAO and IPGRI staff to countries.

36. The WIEWS/PGR database holds information on national and international *ex situ* collections, which has been provided by countries in response to FAO's "Survey of National Plant Genetic Resource Activities for Agricultural Species". This survey was initiated in March 1992, and is a major Regular Programme activity of direct relevance to the work of the ICPPGR. Responses to the survey questionnaire have been received from over 80 countries, which provide information on national contact points and institutions, and, in most cases, comprehensive information on germplasm collections. A separate questionnaire on forest genetic resources was sent to heads of Forest Services in FAO Member Countries in March 1993. To date, a response has been received from nearly 90 countries.

37. Initial response by countries to the request for Country Reports has been very positive. A number of countries have initiated work on these reports, and some reports are in advanced stages of preparation. It is hoped that the process of preparing Country Reports will

provide a positive stimulus to national programme evaluation and planning. However, to be of optimal use in the ICPPGR process, these reports should be completed as soon as possible, bearing in mind that sub-regional meetings are anticipated in the first half of 1995, and that the Secretariat should begin to draft major project documents in August 1995.

38. While the responsibility in this country-driven process rests primarily with countries, FAO may, subject to the availability of funds, provide some assistance in the preparation of Country Reports. Several meetings have been held with IPGRI, and with FAO-identified consultants in the regions, to plan and coordinate such technical assistance to countries.

IV.4 *Planning of Sub-regional Meetings*

39. These meetings will provide a further important opportunity for individual countries to make an input and for dialogue between countries in the process of developing the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources and the Global Plan of Action. At these meetings, governments can identify and discuss common problems and opportunities, through the presentation of the Country Reports. Thus far, tentative arrangements have been discussed for six meetings to be held during the period between March and July 1995. Several developing countries, and one CGIAR Centre, have expressed their interest in hosting such meetings. The Project Secretariat is actively pursuing these discussions, in order to finalize arrangements, while simultaneously assessing the project's capacity to provide the additional funds necessary to make the meetings possible. Topics for the sub-regional meetings are now being identified in cooperation with countries.

IV.5 *Cooperation with IPGRI*

40. Building upon the already existing agreements between FAO and IPGRI, a Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared specifically to ensure substantial, detailed cooperation between the two organizations in the ICPPGR process. Components of the Memorandum cover coordination arrangements, collaboration in country reports preparation, collaboration at regional and sub-regional level, scientific collaboration, and financing and implementation. At the time of the preparation of this document, it was anticipated that the Memorandum would be signed prior to the Extraordinary Session of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources. In addition, separate Letters of Agreement are being developed to facilitate assistance from IPGRI in various regions, and for an appropriate transfer of funds to IPGRI for this purpose. In the regions, IPGRI involvement will largely take the form of assistance to countries in the preparation of country reports, through consultants identified by FAO.

41. ICPPGR and IPGRI staff are in close and virtually daily contact on a wide range of technical and scientific topics. The two staffs are presently engaged in analysing in detail the information and research needs of the ICPPGR, and are discussing cooperation in generating studies of use to the process. Mechanisms for the exchange of information in computer databases are being developed.

IV.6 *Other Activities by the Secretariat*

42. A number of important economic, technical and legal studies, of relevance to critical issues in the elaboration of the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, and Global Plan of Action, as well as for the Revision of the International Undertaking, have been commissioned, or otherwise encouraged by the CPGR and ICPPGR Secretariats. It is anticipated that a number of these studies will be published by the Project, or jointly with

IPGRI, in order to broaden discussion of important issues, and stimulate creative analysis and problem-solving. IPGRI has commissioned a complementary range of studies for the same purposes.

43. The Project Secretariat has produced several informal briefing papers, and, with the assistance of the FAO Information Material Production Branch, a set of overhead projections, in order to explain the project and related activities to a wider audience.

IV.7 *Supporting Activities by other Bodies*

44. Besides activities which are an integral part of the ICPPGR Project (that is, those specifically provided for in the project document, and the project budget), there are a large number of complementary activities being carried out by various governments and organizations in support of the ICPPGR, and which provide important inputs to the process. The ICPPGR Secretariat's role is to encourage and facilitate such initiatives. These complementary activities include the convening, by Canada, of a meeting of francophone Africa countries, in May and June 1994, and of a Workshop on the Genetic Resources of Boreal Zone Forest Species, planned for June 1995, and organized by the Canadian Forest Service, in technical collaboration with FAO, especially the Forestry Department. IPGRI and other IARCs are providing inputs to the ICPPGR, through a number of complementary activities, including a study on under-utilized crops, and a study of the extent of *ex situ* conservation efforts for the Centres' mandate crops. Other complementary activities are being organized by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (United Kingdom), on the mapping of rare plants of importance as food sources, or as wild relatives of crop plants, and by several non-governmental organizations, on plant genetic resource conservation and utilization activities of farmers' organizations, and other non-governmental organizations.

V. FUNDING SITUATION

45. Activities to date have been carried out under Phase I of the project, which has a budget of about US \$3.8 million. A new consolidated project document, covering the complete project, is in the process of review and approval, with a total donor contribution budget of US \$6,586,473. This budget allows for a minimal set of activities, while maintaining a country-driven process. It does not, for example, include provisions for Secretariat expenses after the end of June 1996, the month in which the Conference is to be held. Nor does the budget cover the cost of the Conference itself (see para 48); travel and *per diem* costs of developing country participants in the Conference (see para 49); contributions from the FAO Regular Programme, and from member countries, in the form of the provision of Associated Professional Officers (see para 50); and the costs of complementary activities which, while supportive of the ICPPGR, are not integral or core activities included in the project document and its budget (see para 44).

46. Contributions to the ICPPGR project budget to date total some US\$ 3.8 million, comprising contributions from Germany, United States, Sweden and Norway. (See table 1). This leaves US\$ 2.7 million, or 42% of the budget, still to be committed. As noted above, this is a minimal budget, in which further reductions could be made only by compromising the country-driven nature of the project.

<i>Table 1: Level of current contributions</i>	
<i>Donor</i>	<i>Amount provided or committed (US\$)</i>
Germany	1,702,064
Sweden	961,894
Norway	136,705
United States	1,050,000
Total Committed	3,850,663
<i>Amount to be raised</i>	<i>2,735,810</i>
Total Budget	6,586,473

47. In addition to the contributions listed above, a number of donors have indicated their intention in principle to contribute to the ICPPGR. These include Canada, France, Iran, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development. The ICPPGR Secretariat estimates the amount expected from such unconfirmed pledges to be in the range of US\$ 0.8 to 1.4 million. However, the Secretariat cannot plan, commit funds, or initiate activities until such pledges are confirmed and moneys available.

48. In addition to its contribution of US\$ 1,702,064 for the ICPPGR preparatory process, Germany is also attributing approximately US\$ 800,000 to the cost of hosting the conference itself, and to project-related national activities, which makes Germany's total commitment approximately US\$ 2.5 million.

49. As noted in para 45, the core project budget does not include funding for the participation of developing countries in the Conference itself. The Commission on Plant Genetic Resources recommended that at least two delegates per country should attend the Conference, in order to ensure the presence of both technical experts and policy makers. If the project is expected to contribute to the travel and *per diem* costs of two delegates per developing country, as suggested, full provision for this would need to be made.

50. In addition to the project budget, France and Canada have each agreed to provide the ICPPGR Secretariat with the services of an Associate Professional Officer. Both officers are in advanced stages of recruitment. FAO is contributing from the Regular Programme, through the secondment of one professional staff member, as well as through the participation of other Headquarters and field staff in support of the project. Similarly, staff of IPGRI are supporting the Project. A number of other organizations and countries are supporting complementary activities to the project (see para 44).

VI. ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

51. The country-driven consultative process is now coming into full operation, and will provide countries with a number of opportunities—at country level, at sub-regional or regional level, and at the global level—to make valuable inputs to the development of the first

Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, and the Global Plan of Action. The Commission may wish to give its guidance upon ways in which this consultative process may be further articulated.

52. The success of the process will hinge upon countries preparing Country Reports on time, and upon the active involvement of countries hosting sub-regional and regional meetings. The Commission may wish to recognize the important contribution such countries will make in assuming these responsibilities, and stress the need to adhere to the agreed time-frame.

54. The attention of the Commission and its Working Group is drawn, in particular, to the related issues of ensuring the full financing of the ICPPGR, and maintaining the agreed timetable for the preparatory process, in order that the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, and the costed Global Plan of Action, may be ready for the Conference in 1996. The Commission and its Working Group may wish to advise on these matters. The timeframe for the preparation of the Conference, set out in Figure 1 above, is already very short. Further delay could seriously compromise the participatory, country-driven nature of the process. Because some of the necessary commitments for actions envisaged in the strategy of the ICPPGR cannot be made without full financing, the cancellation of some activities, and further delays are likely, unless adequate contributions to the project budget are made available promptly. Should finances and circumstances make it impossible to hold certain of the sub-regional meetings, the ICPPGR Secretariat would have to assume added responsibilities in communicating with governments to ensure that input from countries is obtained.