

June 2008



# The International Treaty

ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



## INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

### FIRST MEETING OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING COORDINATION MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY

Bonn, Germany, 16 May 2008

## REPORT

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The first meeting of the capacity building coordination mechanism for the implementation of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (“the Treaty”) was held in Bonn on 16 May 2008, convened by the Treaty Secretariat.

2. At its Second Session, in 2007, the Governing Body of the Treaty had decided to establish a coordination mechanism for capacity building for the national and regional implementation of the Treaty, with the overall goal to ensure that capacity is built in a coherent, coordinated, equitable and regionally balanced way, which reflects the actual needs of Contracting Parties and stakeholders and follows the guidance of the Governing Body.

3. This meeting was intended to provide a platform which will serve organizations and institutions involved in capacity building activities for the implementation of the Treaty to exchange information and coordinate on capacity building initiatives around the world.

4. Stakeholders who attended were the actual providers of capacity building for the implementation of the Treaty, i.e. staff from international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, bilateral development aid agencies, private foundations etc. They represented their respective organisation or institution but did not act as representatives of Contracting Parties of the Treaty. The list of participants is in the *Appendix* to this document.

5. The following main issues were covered during the meeting of the Capacity Building Coordination Mechanism (CBCM):

- (a) an update was provided on recent developments in Treaty implementation;
- (b) a needs assessment and analysis of capacity building needs and priorities for Treaty implementation were presented, based on a survey conducted among Contracting Parties;

- (c) a stocktaking of planned and ongoing capacity building projects and programmes undertaken by different national and international organizations and institutions was undertaken; and
  - (d) Future development and evolution of the CBCM were discussed, including
    - CBCM structure;
    - a methodology of information exchange; and
    - products and activities on capacity building.
6. The meeting benefited from three presentations by the Treaty Secretariat on the following issues: 1) the current stage of implementation of the International Treaty; 2) capacity building needs and priorities of Contracting Parties for Treaty implementation; 3) an illustrative framework of cooperation for capacity building: the FAO/Bioversity International /International Treaty Secretariat Joint Programm for Implementation of the Treaty.
7. After a brief tour de table, with self-introductions by all participants, three working groups of seven to nine persons each were formed to consider the issues (c) and (d).

## II. UPDATE ON THE CURRENT STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATY

8. In order to gain a common understanding of the major issues at the agenda of the Treaty, the Secretariat presented the recent developments in Treaty implementation focusing on the three areas identified in the Work Programme and Budget presented at the Second Session of the Governing Body of the Treaty, held in Rome in November 2007, namely the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing (MLS), the Funding Strategy (FS) and the Capacity Building for Treaty Implementation.<sup>1</sup>
9. The Secretary of the Treaty, Dr Shakeel Bhatti, noted that the International Treaty is an *operational* Treaty, which establishes functional systems (in particular the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing). He also emphasised that the Treaty is at a critical stage of its implementation.

## III. NEED ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

10. The Treaty Secretariat had initiated a process to identify the capacity building needs and priorities of Contracting Parties for the implementation of the Treaty. Participants strongly welcomed receiving an overview of where countries stand in the implementation of the International Treaty and what their needs and priorities are.
11. Three main categories were identified for an effective implementation of the Treaty:  
 1) Consultation/information gathering and public awareness; 2) Legal and regulatory measures, 3) Operational and administrative measures.
12. The results of the survey, presented in document IT/CBCM-1/08/3, reflect the strong need of Contracting Parties for capacity building for the national and regional implementation of the Treaty.
13. It was noted that this survey was a first step to systematically identify capacity building needs and priorities and would thereby serve as a starting point for a targeted and effective planning process. However, additional information from other sources was needed to further differentiate specific needs of Contracting Parties and other stakeholders. There was still a challenge to get more in-depth information on a country level, since there could be highly

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<sup>1</sup> Modules A, B and C respectively in the Work Programme and Budget 2008-09

diversified needs in a same region. Participants suggested developing and informing on country-based studies and comparative studies in order to demonstrate the benefits, and to learn lessons on implementation of the Treaty. This would also create positive incentives for non-Contracting Parties to ratify the Treaty.

14. Moreover, while the implementation of the Treaty progresses, it is expected that needs and priorities for capacity building will evolve. Consequently, a regular assessment of capacity building needs and priorities was foreseen and recommended.

#### **IV. STOCKTAKING ON EXISTING OR PLANNED ACTIVITIES**

15. The CBCM meeting has allowed the development of a first overview on existing or planned activities on capacity building for the implementation of the Treaty conducted by selected organisations.

16. Since the entry into force of the Treaty in 2004 and especially since the First Session of the Governing Body of the Treaty in 2006, a substantial number of capacity building activities for the implementation of the Treaty has been carried out by various providers of capacity building, including international and regional organizations, public and private research institutions, bilateral development cooperation organizations, non-governmental organizations and private foundations.

17. A first analysis of the main characteristics of those activities and the experiences gained shows that capacity building for Treaty implementation has only recently been started and in many cases is still in the planning phase. Therefore, the capacity building needs expressed by the Contracting Parties are at present not fully covered, whether geographically or thematically. The amount of the capacity building offers available to Contracting Parties and stakeholders should be expanded both by increasing activities from the existing providers and by additional providers getting involved.

18. If this challenge is to be met, it will only work through a concerted effort, multiplying forces through synergies. As the supply of capacity building is far from meeting the demand for it, the objective of coordination is less on avoiding potential duplication than on establishing collaborative partnerships to foster the pooling of resources and expertise. The CBCM meeting was driven by a very creative and constructive spirit, which enabled an informal exchange of information on who is doing what and where. This enabled providers to find complementarities, get in contact with potential partners and draw inspiration from the work done and the approaches taken by others.

19. Only relatively few providers have so far started implementing specific capacity building activities on the Treaty. Many providers integrate Treaty implementation issues into capacity building activities on more general issues such as intellectual property rights or general access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources. However, several providers indicated that they plan to provide specific assistance for Treaty implementation in the future, building upon the experience gained from previous work in related areas.

20. Most on-going activities specific to Treaty implementation focus on information dissemination and on training, through workshops, modules and production of material. At this stage, there is only little technical and legal assistance provided, whether through studies or provision of equipment.

21. Most providers focus on one or several substantive areas out of the whole range of substantive parts of the Treaty, such as Farmers' Rights, conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, or the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing.

22. Consequently, the exchange of ideas and information during the meeting between providers working in different substantive areas and addressing different user groups was appreciated by participants. It has enabled the strengthening of linkages between different organizations or individuals working on different issues within the same regions.

23. In order to facilitate coordination and exchange of information in a more comprehensive way, a more systematic assessment of existing or planned capacity building activities has been recommended by the participants.

## V. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CBCM

24. Besides taking stock of planned and ongoing capacity building projects and programmes undertaken by different organizations and institutions, the working groups also discussed the future development and evolution of the CBCM, including its structure, methodology for information exchange, and its products and activities on capacity building. This section summarizes the main comments gathered from the work accomplished by the three working groups regarding such future development of the CBCM.

### A. CBCM structure

25. At the outset, the working groups recognized the usefulness of the CBCM meeting to bridge the information gaps between

- a. the International Treaty Secretariat and capacity building providers;
- b. the different capacity building providers; and
- c. the capacity building providers and Contracting Parties, through the need analysis provided by the Secretariat.

26. The participants agreed on the fact that the coordination mechanism would be a platform linking different individuals coming from international and regional organizations, public and private research institutions, bilateral development cooperation organizations, non-governmental organizations and private foundations that are interested or involved in designing and implementing capacity building activities for the implementation of the Treaty.

27. The enlargement of membership of the platform to additional stakeholders, like recipients of capacity building and potential donors for capacity building activities, was raised for consideration.

28. Similarly, it was noted that the platform could offer an important opportunity to discuss the implications of emerging issues, such as soaring food prices or climate change, for the implementation of the Treaty.

### B. Methodology of exchange of information

29. It was agreed that the coordination mechanism would consist essentially, at least in its first year of its existence and subject to availability of funds, of face to face meetings organised on a regular basis, and wherever possible of electronic communication means.

30. Based on the positive experience during the present meeting, it was proposed that the future meetings of the CBCM should be kept as informal as possible to allow for a free exchange of information and ideas.

31. It was suggested to limit the CBCM to an **information sharing** exercise where each participant gets the opportunity to learn what others are doing and facilitate informal but systematic interactions and sharing of knowledge, ideas and expertise on issues related to Treaty implementation as well as maximising the use of relevant experiences and lessons learned.

### C. Products and activities on capacity building

32. Participants in the meeting agreed to assist in the development of an electronic newsletter to communicate between capacity building providers on what needs to be done and what is already planned to be done. This newsletter could be structured on a combined basis between a substantive

basis (which would help participants to understand what has been, or is being, done in substance) and an organizational basis (will help participants to know what has been, or is being, done by each organization).

33. In addition, an e-mail listserver and a dedicated webpage (on the Treaty website) was also identified as useful means of interaction to enhance communication and exchange of information among participants on capacity building projects.

34. Both tools could be used in the period between the meetings of the CBCM, to share with the members of the CBCM platform relevant information and documentation, including project reports, summaries of their ongoing activities as well as outlines of project proposal.

35. Other products/activities were mentioned for future consideration: (1) the possibility of developing indicators to prove to donors that real stakeholder needs are being met; and (2) a list of experts who could be called upon for capacity building work, that could be formalized by the Governing Body at a later stage.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

36. The CBCM meeting reinforced the idea and the need of having a mechanism that helps the exchange of information on capacity building activities. It has been agreed that this mechanism should stay simple and flexible with minimal resources requirements. As experience is gained over time, improvements could be envisaged with more actionable recommendations to foster coordination and collaboration among the different players, like for instance a roadmap of a minimum level of core capacity building activities that will need to be carried out in a certain time.

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*APPENDIX*

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## **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**

### Capacity Building Coordination Mechanism

Bonn, 16 May 2008

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