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联合国
粮食及
农业组织

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Продовольственная и
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организация
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Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

Item 5.1 of the Provisional Agenda

COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Thirteenth Regular Session

Rome, 18 – 22 July 2011

REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

Rome, 4-6 April 2011

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CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/REPORT

Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and
Agriculture

**Intergovernmental Technical Working Group
on Forest Genetic Resources**

First Session

**Rome, Italy
4 – 6 April 2011**



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/REPORT

COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

**REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION
OF THE
INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP
ON FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES**

Rome, Italy, 4 – 6 April 2011

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Rome, 2011

The documents prepared for the First Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on **Forest** Genetic Resources of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture are available on the Internet at:

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/fgr/67904/en>

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CONTENTS

	<i>Para</i>
I. Introduction	1
II. Opening of the Session and Election of the Chair and Vice-chairs, and <i>Rapporteur</i>	2 – 9
III. Preparation of <i>The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources</i>	10 – 20
IV. Biotechnologies and the conservation and utilization of forest genetic resources	21 – 27
V. Review of the Commission's Multi-year Programme of Work – Forest genetic resources	28 – 30
VI. Other Business	31 - 35
VII. Closing Statements	36 – 37

Appendices

- A Agenda of the First Session
- B List of Documents
- C Members of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources elected at the Twelfth Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
- D List of Delegates and Observers

COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

Rome, Italy, 4 – 6 April 2011

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The First Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources (Working Group) was held in Rome, Italy, from 4 to 6 April 2011. The Members of the Working Group elected by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Commission), at its Twelfth Regular Session, are listed in *Appendix C*. The list of Delegates and Observers is given in *Appendix D*.

II. OPENING OF THE SESSION AND ELECTION OF THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIRS AND RAPPORTEUR

2. The Secretary of the Working Group, Mr Oudara Souvannavong, welcomed Members of the Working Group and Observers and thanked them for attending the meeting.

3. The Working Group elected Mr Tore Skroppa (Norway) as Chair. Mr Adjumane Aimé Kadio (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr Elpidio Rimando (Philippines), Mr Eduardo Gándara Welch (Chile), Mr Anwar Kozah (Lebanon), Mr Robert Kiapranis (Papua New Guinea) and Ms Tannis Beardmore (Canada) were elected as Vice-Chairs. Mr Kinley Tenzin (Bhutan) was elected *Rapporteur*.

4. In taking up his position, Mr Skroppa emphasized the importance for the Working Group to provide sound advice to the Commission's next regular session and to inform countries that were absent of the outcomes of the meeting. Mr Skroppa stressed the importance for all countries to contribute to the preparation of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resource (Report)* through the timely submission of their Country Report.

5. Mr Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director-General, Forestry Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), on behalf of Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO, opened the meeting and welcomed the delegates and observers to the meeting. He stressed the importance of forests and trees in performing key economic and ecological functions, including providing shelter for much of the world's biodiversity, and emphasized that maintaining forest genetic diversity was essential to enable adaptation to future changes, including climate change.

6. Mr Eduardo Rojas-Briales welcomed the integration of the Report in the Multi-Year Programme of Work of the Commission. The Report would provide a solid information base that would enhance the implementation of forest genetic programmes and strengthen collaboration in the management of forest genetic resources at national, regional and global levels. He thanked National Focal Points, Bioversity International, the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the regional networks in forest research and genetic resources for their important contributions to the on-going preparation of the Report and stressed that highest priority should be given to the timely submission of Country Reports. Mr Rojas-Briales urged donors to support the preparation of Country Reports. He emphasized the important role of the Commission and its Working Group in guiding the preparation of the Report.

7. Mr Peter Holmgren, Director, Climate, Energy and Tenure Division of FAO, on behalf of Mr Alexander Müller, Assistant Director-General, Natural Resources Management and Environment Department, welcomed delegates and observers. He briefly recalled the Commission's mandate, reviewed major achievements and stressed the important role of Intergovernmental Technical Working Groups in the implementation of the Commission's programme of work.

8. Mr Peter Holmgren noted the progress in the preparation of Country Reports and the Report and stressed the importance of collaboration between FAO, the Commission and partners. He thanked the Governments of Norway, Spain and Sweden for their financial support and the Government of Canada for in-kind support provided for upgrading the FAO Global Information System on Forest Genetic Resources (REFORGEN). He stressed that the success of the Report was dependent both on the timely submission of Country Reports and on the follow-up to its publication.

9. The Working Group adopted the agenda as given in *Appendix A*.

III. PREPARATION OF *THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES*

10. The Working Group considered the documents, *Progress in the preparation of The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*,¹ and, *Human and financial resources requirements*.² It took note of the *Guidelines for the preparation of Country Reports for The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*,³ and of the reports on regional training workshops held for the preparation of Country Reports for *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*.⁴ In the light of difficulties with the preparation of Country Reports, the Working Group recommended that the Commission move the deadline for submission of Country Reports to 1 January 2012.

11. The Working Group welcomed progress made in the preparation of the Report and recommended that the Commission confirm the process for the preparation of the Report, which should be presented to the Commission's Fourteenth Regular Session.

12. The Working Group emphasized the importance of multi-stakeholder consultations at country level in gathering and validating information for the preparation of Country Reports and identifying gaps and needs in the management and conservation of forest genetic resources at the national level.

13. *The Working Group welcomed cooperation at the regional level and emphasized the important role of FAO's regional forestry commissions and other regional entities for the compilation, analysis and synthesis of Country Reports. It also stressed the need to strengthen cooperation with International Organizations, such as the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), and to further develop the global information system on forest genetic resources (REFORGEN).*

14. The Working Group strongly recommended that the Commission urge countries to nominate National Focal Points to ensure the timely delivery of Country Reports for the *State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*.

15. The Working Group stressed the need for additional resources for the preparation of high-quality Country Reports. It recommended that the Commission request FAO to provide sufficient Regular Programme resources for the preparation of the Report, including the preparation of

¹ CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/2.

² CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/2 Add.1.

³ CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/Inf.1.

⁴ CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/Inf.2; CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/Inf.3; and CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/Inf.4.

Country Reports. In addition, it recommended that the Commission urge donors and relevant international organizations to make available extra-budgetary financial resources and in-kind support for the preparation of Country Reports, including for national and regional consultations. The Working Group pointed out that without such support the submission of Country Reports could be seriously delayed and their quality compromised.

16. The Working Group recommended that the Commission decide to convene the Working Group prior to the Commission's Fourteenth Regular Session, *inter alia*, to review the first draft of the Report.

17. The Working Group noted that the preparation of Country Reports should be considered as a strategic planning exercise and a tool for the better assessment and sustainable management of forest genetic resources. It acknowledged that the guidelines present a common framework for the preparation of Country Reports, which governments should use in a flexible manner, taking into account national and regional specificities and the diversity of needs of user groups. The Working Group discussed the species to be included in Country Reports and the possibility of prioritizing species. The Secretariat noted that the guidelines for the preparation of Country Reports leave the identification of relevant species as well as the prioritization to the discretion of countries. A broad based country-driven approach will provide a basis to define priorities for action at global, regional and local levels, considering the wide range of uses of forest genetic resources, as well as regional differences and specificities.

18. The Working Group recommended to the Commission to invite countries to integrate the timely preparation of Country Reports for the Report as well as any follow-up activities into their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.

19. Referring to the information provided by the Secretariat, the Working Group welcomed the expansion of REFORGEN and emphasized its importance for processing and managing Country Report data.

20. Referring to Decision X/36 of the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Secretariat of the Convention welcomed the preparation of the Report as the most comprehensive effort undertaken to date to map the genetic diversity of trees and other forest resources. In the same Decision X/36, the Conference of the Parties had invited Parties of the Convention, other Governments and relevant organizations to support the preparation of the Report, and requested the Executive Secretary to collaborate with FAO in the preparation, including by participating in relevant sessions of the Commission and its Working Group.

IV. BIOTECHNOLOGIES AND THE CONSERVATION AND UTILIZATION OF FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

21. The Working Group considered the document, *Status and trends of biotechnologies applied to the conservation and utilization of genetic resources for food and agriculture and matters relevant for their future development*.⁵ At its Twelfth Regular Session, the Commission had requested FAO to prepare a scoping paper describing the range of biotechnologies being applied to the conservation and utilization of genetic resources for food and agriculture, the current status of application of these technologies and matters relevant for their future development, including relevant policy developments in other international forums, for consideration by the Commission at its next Regular Session. The Commission had requested its Working Groups to review the scoping paper prior to the Commission's Thirteenth Regular Session.

⁵ CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/3.

22. The Working Group reviewed the scoping paper and recommended that the Commission request FAO to make more information available on biotechnologies and issues specifically applied to forest genetic resources. This additional information could be included in a sector-specific annex. The Secretariat informed the Working Group that more detailed sector-specific information as well as the proceedings of the FAO International Technical Conference on Agricultural Biotechnologies in Developing Countries (ABDC-10) would be made available to the Commission's Thirteenth Regular Session.

23. The Working Group highlighted the special nature of the forestry sector and, consequently, its specific needs with regard to the application of biotechnologies in assessing and managing forest genetic resources. It noted that this sector dealt with long-lived organisms, characterized by high diversity between and within populations, whose phenotypic plasticity is crucial for the ability to respond and adapt to future environmental conditions, in particular related to climate change. It was noted that the very long duration of the cycle of forest species (sometimes several centuries) is also a factor of vulnerability when the climate evolves more quickly than the capacity of species to adapt.

24. The Working Group recognized the differences of availability and use of biotechnologies across regions, due to the different levels of financial and human resources available in the different regions, and stressed the importance of capacity-building and transfer of relevant knowledge and technologies between countries, through North-South and South-South collaboration. The Working Group also highlighted the potential role of public-private partnerships.

25. The Working Group recommended that the Commission stress the need for more information on bioinformatics. It recognized the importance of forest genetic resources for the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and emphasized their rights to access and the sharing of benefits in relation to forest genetic resources.

26. The Working Group emphasized that the efforts of countries to develop the use of biotechnologies for conservation purposes must be encouraged.

27. The Working Group recommended that the Commission:

- i) Emphasize the need for the development of specific standards and technical protocols for the molecular characterization of forest genetic resources in order to generate reproducible and comparable data;
- ii) Request FAO to present to the Commission at its next session a specific analysis on the investments, returns and socio-ecological impacts of biotechnologies for forest genetic resources;
- iii) Request FAO to increase its efforts to strengthen the national capacities of developing countries for priority-setting and policy formulation in biotechnologies for the characterization, conservation and utilization of forest genetic resources;
- iv) Request FAO to strengthen activities for the regular dissemination of updated factual information on the role of biotechnologies for the characterization, conservation and utilization of forest genetic resources through existing databases, networks and newsletters (e.g. DAD-IS, FAO-BiotechNews and WIEWS); and
- v) Request FAO to explore mechanisms for future cooperation with relevant international organizations, including for fostering North-South and South-South cooperation, for harnessing the benefits of biotechnologies for the characterization, conservation and utilization of forest genetic resources.

V. REVIEW OF THE COMMISSION'S MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK - FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES

28. The Working Group considered the document, *Review of the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work – Forest Genetic Resources*.⁶ The Working Group recommended not to amend the milestone, *Presentation of the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*, foreseen for the Commission's Fourteenth Regular Session.

29. The Working Group stressed the need for a follow-up to the presentation of the Report and noted that this could take the form of Plans of Action at national, regional and global level. The Working Group recommended that the Commission further discuss the possible form and content of a Global Plan of Action once the preparation of the Report is in a more advanced stage. The Working Group also recommended that any follow-up the Commission may wish to consider should build on existing national, regional and global programmes. The Commission should request FAO to continue supporting and strengthening on-going work for the conservation and sustainable use and management of forest genetic resources as well as strengthening cooperation with relevant networks and international organizations. The Working Group recommended that the Commission, in considering follow-up activities, should take into account the need for strengthening the reporting capacities of developing countries and the possibility to further develop and use REFORGEN for this purpose.

30. The Working Group recommended that the Commission consider adding two new milestones to its Multi-Year Programme of Work as it relates to forest genetic resources:

- i) The follow-up to and update of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* (CGRFA-15); and
- ii) A review of progress made in the follow-up to *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* (CGRFA-17).

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

Thematic background studies for The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources

31. Bioversity International and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) presented key issues of thematic background studies they currently coordinate for *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*, including on indicators for forest genetic diversity, erosion and vulnerability; the role of forest genetic resources in the adaptation to biotic and abiotic factors, with a focus on climate change; the use of native species in biodiversity restoration and management; and the use of forest genetic resources in decentralised development for food security, poverty alleviation and livelihood improvement. The Working Group recommended that the Commission invite further contributions and case studies to improve the quality of the thematic studies.

The Panel of Experts and the Working Group

32. The Secretary provided additional information on the role of the Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources versus the role of the Working Group. He highlighted the different but complementary nature and role of the two bodies. The Working Group acknowledged the technical and scientific advice provided by the Panel of Experts in defining the scope and structure of the Report.

Transfer of knowledge between sectors

33. The Working Group noted that the exchange of knowledge and transfer of technologies across sectors could be beneficial. For instance, the tools and methods related to *in situ*

⁶ CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/4.

conservation and dynamic conservation in natural populations are more developed in forestry, which could be useful to the conservation of crop wild relatives. Conversely, the interest for *ex situ* conservation for forest trees is increasing, which is where forestry could draw on the experiences of *ex situ* conservation methodologies from the crop sector.

34. The Working Group noted that integrating activities on crops, farm animals and forest genetic resources facilitated the exchange of knowledge and information and it emphasized the key to success of such integration is knowledge management.

Conservation of forest genetic resources for monitoring changes in genetic diversity

35. The Working Group considered the need to safeguard genetic material for monitoring changes in forest genetic diversity over time. It noted that Country Reports could contribute to identifying the needs in *ex situ* conservation. In discussing the possible way forward, the Working Group recommended that the Commission consider criteria for prioritization, adequate access and benefit sharing arrangements and proper monitoring processes.

VII. CLOSING STATEMENTS

36. Mr José Antonio Prado Donoso, Director of the Forest Assessment, Management and Conservation Division of FAO, on behalf of FAO and Mr Eduardo Rojas-Briales, thanked and congratulated the Working Group for its accomplishment in providing crucial recommendations to the Commission, in particular for the preparation and timely presentation of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*, and reiterated that FAO remains committed to supporting countries in the preparation of their Country Reports. He indicated his appreciation for the recommendations made in the area of biotechnologies for the conservation, sustainable use and improvement of forest genetic resources and the need to transfer relevant knowledge and technologies between countries. Mr Jose Antonio Prado Donoso thanked the Chair for his excellent guidance and expressed his appreciation to the Secretariat and all FAO staff for their dedicated work in the preparation of and during this first session of the Working Group.

37. In his closing remarks, the Chair stated that this first session had been highly successful and thanked the Working Group and Observers for their insight and positive contributions. He also thanked the Secretariat and the *Rapporteur* for their excellent work and expressed appreciation for the dedicated efforts of interpreters and translators.

APPENDIX A

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP
ON FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES**

First Session

Rome, 4 - 6 April 2011

AGENDA

1. Election of Chair, Vice-Chairs and *Rapporteur*
2. Adoption of the agenda and timetable
3. Preparation of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources*
4. Biotechnologies and the conservation and utilization of forest genetic resources
5. Review of the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work – Forest genetic resources
6. Other business
7. Adoption of the Report

APPENDIX B

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Working Documents

CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/1	Provisional agenda
CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/2	Progress Report on the preparation of <i>The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources</i>
CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/2 Add. 1	Human and financial resources requirements
CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/3	Status and trends of biotechnologies applied to the conservation and utilization of genetic resources for food and agriculture and matters relevant for their future development
CGRFA/WG-FGR-1/11/4	Review of the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work – Forest Genetic Resources

Information Documents

CGRFA/WG-GR-1/11/Inf.1	Guidelines for the preparation of Country Reports for <i>The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources</i>
CGRFA/WG-GR-1/11/Inf.2	Report of the Regional Training Workshops in Ecuador and the Republic of the Congo for FAO's <i>State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources</i> for the finalization of Guidelines
CGRFA/WG-GR-1/11/Inf.3	Report of the Regional Training Workshop for National Focal Points in Latin America, Cali, Colombia – November 2010
CGRFA/WG-GR-1/11/Inf.4	Report of the Regional Training Workshop for National Focal Points in the Pacific, Fiji – January 2011
CGRFA/WG-GR-1/11/Inf.5	List of documents
CGRFA/WG-GR-1/11/Inf.6	Practical information for participants
CGRFA/WG-GR-1/11/Inf.7	Statutes of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Forest Genetic Resources and Members elected by the Twelfth Regular Session of the Commission

APPENDIX C

**MEMBERS OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP
ON FOREST GENETIC RESOURCES,
ELECTED AT THE TWELFTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
Rome, 19-23 October 2009**

<i>Composition (no. of countries per region)</i>	<i>Country</i>
Africa (5)	Burundi Côte d'Ivoire Democratic Republic of the Congo Tunisia Zambia
Asia (5)	Bhutan India Indonesia Myanmar Philippines
Europe (5)	Finland France Italy Norway Spain
Latin America and the Caribbean (5)	Brazil Chile Cuba Ecuador El Salvador
Near East (3)	Islamic Republic of Iran Lebanon Yemen
North America (2)	Canada United States of America
Southwest Pacific (2)	Papua New Guinea Vanuatu

APPENDIX D – ANNEXE D – ANEXO D

**LIST OF DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS
LISTE DES DÉLÉGUÉS ET OBSERVATEURS
LISTA DE DELEGADOS Y OBSERVADORES**

Chairperson:	Mr Tore Skroppa
Président:	(Norway)
Presidente:	
Vice-Chairpersons:	Ms Tannis Beardmore
Vice-présidents:	(Canada)
Vicepresidentes:	
	Mr Eduardo Gándara Welch
	(Chile)
	Mr Adjumane Aimé Kadio
	(Côte d'Ivoire)
	Mr Anwar Kozah
	(Lebanon)
	Mr Robert Kiapranis
	(Papua New Guinea)
	Mr Elpidio Rimando
	(Philippines)
Rapporteur:	Mr Kinley Tenzin
	(Bhutan)

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