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para la
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CONFERENCE

Twenty-eighth Session

20 October - 2 November 1995

**BROADENING THE MANDATE OF THE FAO COMMISSION ON PLANT
GENETIC RESOURCES TO COVER ALL GENETIC RESOURCES
RELEVANT TO FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

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BROADENING THE MANDATE OF THE FAO COMMISSION ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES TO COVER ALL GENETIC RESOURCES RELEVANT TO FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The field of genetic resources and biological diversity is changing rapidly, following the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and in line with the provisions of UNCED's Agenda 21. This has led to increasing worldwide awareness of the importance of genetic resources for food and agriculture for the sustainability of the planet, and has caused a considerable expansion of national and international efforts for the conservation and sustainable use of these resources. The emphasis that many countries are now putting on the use of genetic resources within agrobiodiversity has implications for the programmes of the Organization, and its approaches to the issues.

2. In light of these events, the question of the broadening of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to cover all genetic resources relevant to food and agriculture, was raised by the First Extraordinary Session of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources (CPGR) on 7-11 November 1994. The matter was then discussed by the FAO Council at its Hundred and seventh Session (15-24 November 1994). The Council *"agreed on a number of points: that an intergovernmental framework for dealing with animal genetic resources for food and agriculture was urgently needed; that duplication of functions with the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity should be avoided; and that current activities on plant genetic resources should not be affected by widening the Commission's mandate."* The Council referred the matter to its technical committees and again to the Commission itself for further advice. The matter was accordingly considered at the Twenty-first Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) (10-13 March 1995), Twelfth Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) (13-16 March 1995), Thirteenth Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) (27-31 March 1995), and reported to the Hundred and eighth Session of the Council (5-14 June 1995). The Report of the Council was subsequently discussed by the Sixth Session of the CPGR (19-30 June 1995). Appendix I presents relevant extracts from the reports of each of these sessions.

II. THE BROADENING OF THE MANDATE OF THE COMMISSION

3. The Hundred and eighth Session of the Council *"recommended that the Conference agree, at its Twenty-eighth Session, to broaden the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to that of a Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture."* **A draft Resolution for the broadening of the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to cover all genetic resources relevant to food and agriculture, is set out at the end of this document,** for the consideration of, and possible adoption by, the Conference. The draft Resolution reflects the recommendations of the Council and its technical committees on the possible structure, terms of reference and secretariat for the broadened Commission and includes, as an annex, the proposed Statutes of the broadened Commission.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BROADENED MANDATE OF THE COMMISSION

4. While there was consensus in all the bodies that discussed the matter that the mandate of the Commission should be broadened, much of the discussions focused on the way in which the broadened mandate should be implemented. These discussions were reflected in the conclusions of the Hundred and eighth Session of the Council. In recommending the broadening of the mandate of

the Commission, the Council also "advised that the whole process should be carried out through a step-by-step approach, beginning with animal genetic resources".

5. The Sixth Session of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources, reiterating the views already expressed by the Council at its Hundred and seventh Session, "agreed that this [the broadening of the scope] *should not interfere with the ongoing negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking, or with the preparation of the Fourth International Technical Conference.*"¹

6. These concerns are reflected in the draft Conference Resolution.

IV. SECTORAL WORKING GROUPS OF THE COMMISSION

7. The Council, at its Hundred and eighth Session "agreed that a broadened Commission should be assisted by sectoral working groups, with appropriate geographical balance, for plant, animal, forestry and fishery genetic resources, Although there was support by many Members for intergovernmental instead of expert groups, to prepare the work for the broadened Commission, in the absence of a consensus on the nature and composition of the working groups and due to the budgetary implications associated thereto, the Council referred the matter to the Conference. In this context, the Council welcomed the offer to provide extra-budgetary support."

8. Three options for the structure and composition of the working groups could be considered. These are:

- A. Open-ended intergovernmental working groups, in the sessions of which all FAO members may participate fully.² An example, in the case of the Convention on Biological Diversity, is its Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA).
- B. Limited size, intergovernmental working groups composed of FAO members elected by the full Commission to represent regions. An example of such a structure is the Working Group of the CPGR, which has 23 members.³
- C. Working groups composed of Technical Experts, appointed by the secretariat and serving in their personal capacities (with due respect for a regional balance). An example of such a technical expert panel is the FAO Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources, which has 15 members.⁴

9. In the absence of working groups, technical expertise could be obtained through the use of world experts in specific fields, through consultancies and authors' contracts for the preparation of working papers, and, if necessary, their presence at sessions of the Commission in respect of specific items of the agenda.

¹ The Technical Conference will take place in June 1996. The possibility of completing the revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources by the Twenty-ninth session of the Conference is linked to the Organization's ability to hold the negotiating sessions of the Commission proposed by the Commission at its Sixth Session. The negotiating process and its financial implications, are presented in document C 95/INF/19-Sup. 1.

² Being open-ended, this option would result in sessions of varying size, according to the subjects under discussion and the interests involved: participation in the working groups would be likely to vary greatly, and, when important interests are at stake, might occasionally approach that in the full Commission itself.

³ The Working Group is constituted as follows: Africa (five members), Europe (5), Asia (4), Latin America and the Caribbean (4), the Near East (3), North America (1), and the Southwest Pacific (1).

⁴ The Working Groups would each require a sufficient range of expertise to ensure the successful management of their sectors of agrobiodiversity.

10. Factors the Conference may wish to consider in evaluating the options include (i) the representativeness of the working groups, (ii) the degree and nature of technical expertise obtained under the various options, and (iii) the cost.

11. Appendix II presents a comparative analysis of various options and their budgetary implications so as to facilitate the Conference's discussions and possible decisions on the matter.

V. EXPECTED ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

12. The Conference is invited to consider and adopt the draft resolution set out at the end of this document, for the broadening of the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to cover all genetic resources for food and agriculture. It is also invited to consider and decide upon the nature and composition of the working groups, taking into account the comparative analysis of various options, and financial implications, as presented in Appendix II of this document.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION .../95 THE BROADENING OF THE MANDATE OF THE FAO COMMISSION ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES TO COVER ALL ASPECTS OF GENETIC RESOURCES RELEVANT TO FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The Conference,

Recalling its Resolution 9/83 authorizing the establishment of a Commission on Plant Genetic Resources (hereinafter referred to as the Commission), and Council Resolution 1/85 establishing the Commission under Article VI.1 of the Constitution;

Having noted the recommendations of the Council, at its Hundred and eighth Session, to broaden the mandate of the Commission to that of a Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;

Having considered the relevant provisions of the Basic Texts of the Organization and in particular Article VI.1 of the Constitution and the "Principles and Procedures which should govern Conventions and Agreements concluded under Articles XIV and XV of the Constitution, and Commissions and Committees established under Article VI of the Constitution", set out in Appendix R of the Basic Texts of the Organization;

Considering that recent developments, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity, have increased international awareness of the importance of, and the need for an integrated approach to, agrobiodiversity;

Considering that the broadening of the mandate of the Commission will facilitate an integrated approach to agrobiodiversity and coordination with governments, which are increasingly dealing with policy issues regarding biological diversity in an integrated manner;

Considering that recent advances in biotechnology have broken down many of the barriers that separate species, orders and kingdoms, allowing genes to be transferred widely, even between organisms in different kingdoms, and make advisable a single forum on agrobiodiversity where the potential and implications of these techniques, including considerations of biosafety and food security, can be discussed;

Considering that a Commission with a broad mandate would guide and monitor FAO's policies and activities on genetic resources for food and agriculture, and provide for effective cooperation with the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and with other interested international governmental and non-governmental organizations;

Recognizing that the technical approaches to plant, forestry, animal and fisheries biological diversity are different and require specialized expertise in each field, best supplied through a number of sectoral working groups;

Decides to broaden the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to cover all components of biodiversity of relevance to food and agriculture;

Further decides that the Commission, to be known hereafter as "the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture", shall have the Statutes annexed to this Resolution;

Further decides that the process of broadening the scope of the Commission shall be carried out through a step-by-step approach, beginning with animal genetic resources, in a manner that will not adversely affect the important processes under way within the Commission for the preparation of the Fourth International Technical Conference to be held in mid-1996 and for the negotiated revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources;

Requests the Commission to include Animal Genetic Resources in the agenda for its next regular session.

ANNEX TO RESOLUTION .../95
**STATUTES OF THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (THE COMMISSION)**

1. Membership

The Commission shall be open to all Members and Associate Members of the Organization. It shall be composed of those Members or Associate Members which notify the Director-General of their desire to be considered as Members of the Commission.

2. Terms of Reference of the Commission

The Commission shall have a coordinating role and shall deal with policy, sectoral and cross-sectoral matters related to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture. Its terms of reference shall be:

- i) to keep under continuous review all matters relating to the policy, programmes and activities of FAO in the area of genetic resources for food and agriculture, including their conservation and sustainable use and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their utilization, and to advise the Director-General and the Council and, as appropriate, its technical committees, including in particular the Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, on such matters;
- ii) to negotiate or oversee the development, as appropriate, of international agreements, undertakings, codes of conduct or other legal instruments relating to genetic resources for food and agriculture, and to monitor the operation of such instruments;
- iii) to recommend such measures as may be necessary or desirable to ensure the development of a comprehensive global system or systems on genetic resources for food and agriculture and to monitor the operation of its/their components in line with international instruments adopted in this area, including the Convention on Biological Diversity; and
- iv) to facilitate and oversee cooperation between FAO and other international governmental and non-governmental bodies dealing with the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources, including the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

3. Sectoral Working Groups of the Commission

The Commission may be assisted by Sectoral Working Groups, with appropriate geographical balance, for plant, animal, forestry and fishery genetic resources.

4. Terms of Reference of the Sectoral Working Groups

The terms of reference for the Sectoral Working Groups shall be to review the situation with regard to the areas under their respective competences, to advise the Commission on those matters and to consider the progress made in implementing the Commission's programme of work, as well as any other matters referred to them by the Commission.

5. Sessions of the Commission and its Sectoral Working Groups

- i) The Commission shall normally hold one regular session each biennium. It may also decide to convene extraordinary sessions as necessary. Sessions of the Commission shall normally be held at the Organization's Headquarters.

- (ii) The Sectoral Working Groups, where established, shall normally hold one session annually.

6. Other subsidiary bodies

- a) The Commission may establish such subsidiary bodies as it may deem necessary for the effective discharge of its functions.
- b) The establishment of any subsidiary body shall be subject to the determination by the Director-General that the necessary funds are available in the relevant chapter of the budget of the Organization or from extra-budgetary sources. Before taking any decision involving expenditure in connection with the establishment of subsidiary bodies, the Commission shall have before it a report from the Director-General on the programme, administrative and financial implications thereof.

7. Reporting

At the conclusion of each session, the Commission shall submit to the Director-General a report on its activities and recommendations to be taken into consideration when preparing the draft Programme of Work and Budget of the Organization or other submissions to the Organization's governing bodies. The Director-General shall bring to the attention of the Conference through the Council any recommendations adopted by the Commission which have policy implications or which affect the programme or finances of the Organization. As soon as they become available, copies of each report of the Commission will be circulated to Members and Associate Members of the Organization and also to international organizations and agencies that are concerned with genetic resources.

8. Secretariat and expenses

- (i) The Secretary of the Commission shall be appointed by the Director-General and shall be administratively responsible to him. The Secretariat of the Commission will monitor and coordinate the preparations for the Commission meetings and the work for the Sectoral Working Groups, where established. The expenses of the Secretariat of the Commission shall be determined and paid by the Organization within the limits of the relevant appropriations in the approved budget of the Organization.
- (ii) Secretariat services for each Sectoral Working Group, where established, will be provided by the respective technical division of FAO as part of its annual programme of work.
- (iii) Expenses incurred by representatives of members of the Commission and its Working Groups, their alternates and advisers, when attending sessions of the Commission, its Sectoral Working Groups or other subsidiary bodies, as well as the expenses of observers at sessions, shall be borne by the respective governments or organizations.

9. Observers

The participation as observers of Members and Associate Members that are not members of the Commission, of states which are not Members or Associate Members of the Organization, and of international organizations shall be governed by relevant provisions of the rules and principles adopted by the Conference.

10. Rules of Procedure

The Commission may adopt and amend its own rules of procedure, which shall be in conformity with the Constitution and the General Rules of the Organization and with the statement of principles governing commissions and committees adopted by the Conference (see Basic Texts, Section R).

APPENDIX I
REPORT OF THE FIRST EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
(Rome, 7-11 November 1994)

**The possible broadening of the scope of the Commission, to other forms of biological diversity
for food and agriculture**

45. The Commission considered, as an information item, document CL 107/18 of the forthcoming session of the FAO Council, which dealt with the possible broadening of the mandate of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources, to include all genetic resources of interest for food and agriculture. The matter will be formally considered by the FAO Council.
46. The Commission noted various reasons for the broadening of its mandate, and a change of its name to "Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture".
47. It was recalled that when, in 1991, the Commission and Council had discussed this possible broadening of the mandate of the Commission, they had considered the idea, at that time, to be premature. However, developments since then - in particular the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity - were felt to have strengthened the arguments for broadening the scope of the Commission. Some countries considered that it was now politically necessary for the scope to be broadened. Others considered that further examination of the proposal was required. In this context, it was pointed out that the Commission would, in any event, have a heavy agenda for its next session.
48. In particular, further clarification was sought on the following points:
- the implications for the workload of the Commission, including the impact on the time available for the discussion of plant genetic resources at sessions of the Commission, and whether the Secretariat envisaged a reduction of work on plant genetic resources after 1996;
 - whether the Secretariat of a broader Commission would be drawn from all technical departments in FAO;
 - arrangements for the consideration of sectoral issues within a broadened Commission (for example, the possibility of using working groups for specific sectors, and of holding sessions of the Commission on specific themes);
 - the implications for the size and composition of member countries' representations in Commission sessions; and
 - the financial implications.
49. It was suggested that the FAO Council, and its technical committees, as well as COAG, COFI and COFO, and the FAO Secretariat, should be invited to address these questions.
50. It was recalled that, in the session of the Working Group that had met immediately before the Commission itself, most countries had been in favour of broadening the scope of the Commission, but had felt that this should be implemented in a step-by-step manner.
51. The Commission agreed that if its mandate were to be broadened, this should be done in a cautious, step-by-step manner, possibly beginning with domesticated animal genetic diversity. The inclusion of forest genetic resources, and of microbial genetic resources, within the scope of a broadened Commission, was questioned, prior to a discussion of these issues in COFO, and the

deliberations of the first Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Some delegations expressed the view that the question of forest genetic resources should be reconsidered in the light of the different initiatives to implement the UNCED Forest Principles.

REPORT OF THE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL
(Rome, 15-24 November 1994)

Widening of the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources¹⁵

86. The Council took note of documents CL 107/18 and CL 107/8, as well as the introduction by the Secretariat and noted that differing views on the issue of the widening of the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources (CPGR) had been expressed.

87. The Council raised no specific objections to the principle of broadening the mandate of the Commission. The discussion, however, concentrated on the practical feasibilities, the possible impact this might have on the current work of the Commission, and the financial, institutional and administrative implications. There was a wide range of opinion, though all interventions agreed in stressing the need, if the broadening went ahead, of a cautious, step-by-step process.

88. A number of members favoured the initiation without delay of the process of broadening the scope of the CPGR to also cover other aspects of biological diversity for food and agriculture. They generally supported the inclusion of animal genetic resources first, and they suggested to start immediately by setting up an *ad hoc* working group or working party, within the limits of the current financial provisions. In the view of these members, this would give a clear signal, and reaffirm FAO's mandate and role on biodiversity for food and agriculture, and would not affect current activities on plant genetic resources. It was also suggested that the proposal by these members to change the name of the Commission to "Commission on Genetic Resources for food and agriculture" be adopted by the Twenty-eighth Session of the FAO Conference in 1995.

89. Other members considered, however, that the broadening of the Commission could negatively affect the current negotiating process, and activities on plant genetic resources - particularly with regard to the Revision of the International Undertaking, and the preparatory process for the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources - and therefore suggested that the consideration of the broadening of the scope of the Commission should wait until after 1996, and the conclusion of the Fourth International Technical Conference. A concern was also expressed that developing countries might have difficulties in sending delegations able to deal effectively with a number of sectors at once.

90. A number of members also indicated that further information and clarification was required before they could finalize their position on the proposal. In this context, many members emphasized the importance of undertaking a comprehensive study of the financial, institutional and administrative implications as listed in paragraph 48 of the CPGR Report.

91. The Council recommended that a document be submitted to the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) for their consideration, giving detailed proposals on broadening the scope of the Commission, including administrative and financial aspects. The comments of these three committees could provide a basis for the discussions of the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee, the next session of the CPGR, and the next session of the Council, which could then make concrete recommendations to the 1995 session of the Conference. The Council noted that, in any case, any proposal to broaden

¹⁵ CL 107/18; CL 107/PV/12; CL 107/PV/14

the mandate of the Commission would require the approval of the Conference, which had set the mandate in the first place.

92. The Council also agreed on a number of points: that an intergovernmental framework for dealing with animal genetic resources for food and agriculture was urgently needed; that duplication of functions with the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity should be avoided; and that current activities on plant genetic resources should not be affected by widening the Commission's mandate.

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES (Rome, 10-13 March 1995)

Broadening the mandate of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to include other categories of organisms used for food and agriculture

66. The Secretariat introduced document COFI/95/10 and sought the advice of the Committee as to whether the mandate of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources should be broadened to include other categories of organisms used for food and agriculture.

67. The Committee welcomed, in principle, the proposal to expand the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to include other categories of organisms used for food and agriculture, although some delegations felt that such expansion was still premature. It was noted and recommended that many issues surrounding the expansion of the Commission will be submitted to and discussed in greater detail by the Committee on Agriculture (COAG). The Committee recognized that there are issues associated with the expansion that will be specific to fisheries and aquaculture that must be dealt with.

68. The Committee supported the creation of a working group of experts to advise COFI and FAO on how best to integrate fisheries and aquaculture into an expanded Commission. It was recommended that COFI be advised of any work done by FAO on fishery genetic resources. It was suggested that the practical and budgetary implications of the enlargement of the Commission's mandate be carefully assessed. The Committee further recommended a step-by-step approach to incorporating aquatic resources into the new Commission once it is established and when there is support for utilizing the mechanism of Technical Expert Working Groups (TEWG). However, the Committee noted that the TEWG should be operated in a clear and transparent manner and there should be representatives from developing and developed countries. FAO was acknowledged as an appropriate institution for the Secretariat of the expanded Commission.

REPORT OF THE TWELFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY (Rome, 13-16 March 1995)

42. The Committee was informed of the proposal for the broadening of the mandate of the FAO Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to include other categories of organisms used for food and agriculture. It stressed the importance of continuing the activities of the Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources, given the specificity of approaches and strategies in this field.

REPORT OF THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
((Rome, 27-31 March 1995))

Broadening the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources (CPGR)
to include other categories of organisms used for food and agriculture

38. The Committee noted that the Hundred and seventh Session of the Council had discussed the possible broadening of the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources, to cover also other categories of organisms of interest for food and agriculture. It recalled that, in that session, the Council had raised a number of questions, and had referred the matter to COAG, COFO and COFI, as well as to the Programme and Finance Committees, so that it might again be discussed at its Hundred and eighth Session, on the basis of their comments. The Council could then make recommendations to the Conference, which was the body empowered to decide on the possible broadening of the mandate. The questions raised by the Council were addressed by the Secretariat in document COAG/95/5 Supp.1, which was discussed by the Committee.

39. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Hundred and eighth Session of the Council that the Commission's mandate be broadened to include other categories of organisms of interest for food and agriculture, and to encourage the Council to recommend to the Conference that it do so at its Twenty-eighth Session later this year. However, it also recommended that the implementation of the broadened mandate take place through a step-by-step process, beginning with animal genetic resources. The broadened "Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture" would be able to provide guidance to FAO on agrobiodiversity and technical assistance to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, as appropriate. The Committee also felt that, in order to maintain a clear focus in each sector, the broadened Commission should be assisted by sectoral working groups, with a geographic balance, on plants, animals, forestry and fishery genetic resources. There was no consensus as to whether the working groups should be composed of government representatives, or of technical experts serving in a personal capacity.

40. It was further agreed that the mode of broadening the Commission's scope should not adversely affect the important processes under way within the Commission for the revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, and for the preparation of the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, planned for June 1996. The committee, therefore, suggested to the Council that the broadening of the Commission should commence in 1996 and that the practical modalities of implementing the broadened mandate could be considered at the earliest in early 1996 and at the latest during the Commission's seventh regular session, in April 1997. The financial implications should be further analysed and reflected in the 1996-97 Programme of Work and Budget.

41. It was suggested that, in the interim period, until the Commission was actually prepared to implement its broadened mandate and in the light of the Conference's decision as to the nature of the working groups and the timetable for the step-by-step process, FAO should undertake a number of detailed studies and analyses, beginning in 1996, to facilitate the implementation of the Conference decision. These tasks could be carried out by interim *ad hoc* technical groups to be established immediately following Conference decision for animals, and at a later stage for fishery genetic resources. The recommendations of these groups would be brought to the attention of COAG and COFI respectively. In the case of forestry, there was already a panel of experts whose views had been brought to the attention of COFO.

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REPORT OF THE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL
(Rome, 5-14 June 1995)

Report of the Thirteenth Session of the Committee on Agriculture
(Rome, 27-31 March 1995) - Item 6

15. The Council recommended that the Conference agree, at its Twenty-eighth Session, to broaden the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources to that of a Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. It agreed that a broadened Commission should be assisted by sectoral working groups, with appropriate geographical balance, for plant, animal, forestry and fishery genetic resources, and advised that the whole process should be carried out through a step-by-step approach, beginning with animal genetic resources. Although there was support by many Members for intergovernmental instead of expert groups, to prepare the work for the broadened Commission, in the absence of a consensus on the nature and composition of the working groups and due to the budgetary implications associated thereto, the Council referred the matter to the Conference. In this context, the Council welcomed the offer to provide extra-budgetary support.

REPORT OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
(Rome, 19-30 June 1995)

The Broadening of the Mandate of the Commission

42. The Commission took note of document CPGR-6/95/Inf. 4, which contained relevant paragraphs from the reports of the 1995 sessions of the Committees on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and the Hundred and eighth Session of the Council.

43. The Commission noted the recommendation of the Hundred and eighth Session of the Council to the next Conference, that the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources be broadened to that of a Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, by a phased step-by-step approach, beginning with domestic animal genetic resources. The Commission agreed that this should not interfere with the ongoing negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking, or with the preparation of the Fourth International Technical Conference. It was *suggested* that the issue should not be raised in the Commission until these two processes were complete, and that, in the meantime, *ad hoc* sectoral groups, when established, could report to the Committees on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

APPENDIX II

SECTORAL WORKING GROUPS OF THE COMMISSION

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE THREE OPTIONS PRESENTED IN THE TEXT AND THEIR BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

(i) Representativeness

1. *Option A* would allow all countries direct governmental representation. *Option B* provides for a regionally based membership, in which delegates, while appointed by governments, would represent the interests of their entire region. Under *option C*, as the members of the working groups would be serving in their personal capacities, the question of governmental representation does not arise. Members would be selected taking into account the need to maintain a regional balance.

(ii) Technical Expertise

2. In considering the availability of technical skills, it should be borne in mind that *option A* is dependent upon national delegations bringing technical experts as part of their delegations, and, with wide participation, it is likely that delegations would always comprise a mixture of technical and policy expertise. *Option B*, like *option A*, would be dependent on technical experts being part of the delegations: however, with a more limited composition, FAO could, if the Conference wished, invite countries which are members of the working groups to designate representatives who (while representing their countries and regions) are technical experts in the sector. *Option C* would allow the secretariat to select participants in their personal capacities on the basis of their technical expertise.

(iii) Cost

3. The major cost items include (i) the preparation, translation, printing and distribution of documents, (ii) interpretation and servicing costs during the meetings, and (iii) in the case of experts appointed by the secretariat in their personal capacity under *option C*, travel costs and daily subsistence allowances.

4. The major costs associated with preparation of documentation arise from translation, and (as in the case of interpretation) would vary according to the number of languages used in the working groups.⁵ In the running of the working groups, interpretation would also account for the bulk of the costs. In the case of *option A*, both translation and interpretation would be required in the five official languages. The fixed size, intergovernmental group of *option B* would require translation and interpretation into at least three, and probably four languages. The technical expert working groups of *option C* would probably need translation and interpretation into at least three, and more likely four languages, unless the Conference should decide that they should work in a single language.

5. In the case of *option A*, a greater number of conference personnel (for example, messengers and document distribution desk staff) would be needed, together with a large room for plenary meetings and rooms for other possible meetings. *Options B and C*, with fixed numbers of participants, would require fewer conference staff and smaller rooms.

⁵ The number of documents actually printed and distributed should also be taken into account: the greatest number would be needed under *option A*; smaller, similar numbers would be needed under *options B and C*. However, this would not result in major cost differences.

6. In the case of *option C*, with experts selected by the secretariat to serve in a personal capacity, travel and subsistence costs would have to be paid by the Organization. Under the intergovernmental *options A and B*, the Organization would not have such costs, although extra-budgetary funds might be needed to ensure proper representation of developing countries.

7. The following table indicates schematically on a four-point scale the likely relative costs involved in the three options:

	Translation	Printing and Distribution	Interpretation	Servicing	Travel and DSA
Option A:	+++	++	++++	+++	N/A
Option B:	++	+	+++	++	N/A
Option C: ⁶	++	+	+++	++	+++

⁶ Under Option C, no provision has been made for honoraria to experts, although certain countries have requested that honoraria paid to experts by their governments be reimbursed, when these experts attend international meetings in a personal capacity. Translation and interpretation have been included under this option, since these facilities are provided to the FAO Panel of Experts on Forest Gene Resources (the only existing FAO expert group on genetic resources); these facilities are not, however, automatically provided to other expert groups within the Organization.