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CONFERENCE

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE GLOBAL SYSTEM FOR THE CONSERVATION AND UTILIZATION OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In 1983, the FAO Conference decided to establish a permanent intergovernmental forum: the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources. It also adopted a formal framework: the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources. The Commission has since coordinated, overseen and monitored the development of a Global System for the Conservation and Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, within the framework of the Undertaking. (The diagram on page 2 shows the components of the Global System, and the relationship between them.)

2. The main institutional components of the Global System are the Commission and the Undertaking. The Global System also includes other international agreements, technical mechanisms and global instruments. These are at different stages of development. The agreements include the Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer; a draft Code for plant biotechnologies, and international agreements on genebanks. To promote the conservation and exchange of germplasm, there is an International Network of *Ex Situ* Collections under the auspices of FAO and a network of *in situ* conservation areas. The exchange of information and technology is facilitated through the World Information and Early Warning System. Other essential components of the System are: a periodically updated Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, to assist the Commission in carrying out its monitoring role; a rolling Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources, to facilitate its coordinating role, and an International Fund on Plant Genetic Resources. The realization of Farmers' Rights, a concept which was negotiated within the Commission and unanimously adopted by the FAO Conference in order to recognize the rights of germplasm donors, should provide for equity within the System. The Global System draws upon the varied resources of the FAO Technical Departments, particularly the Agriculture Department and the Forestry Department, and the Legal Office.

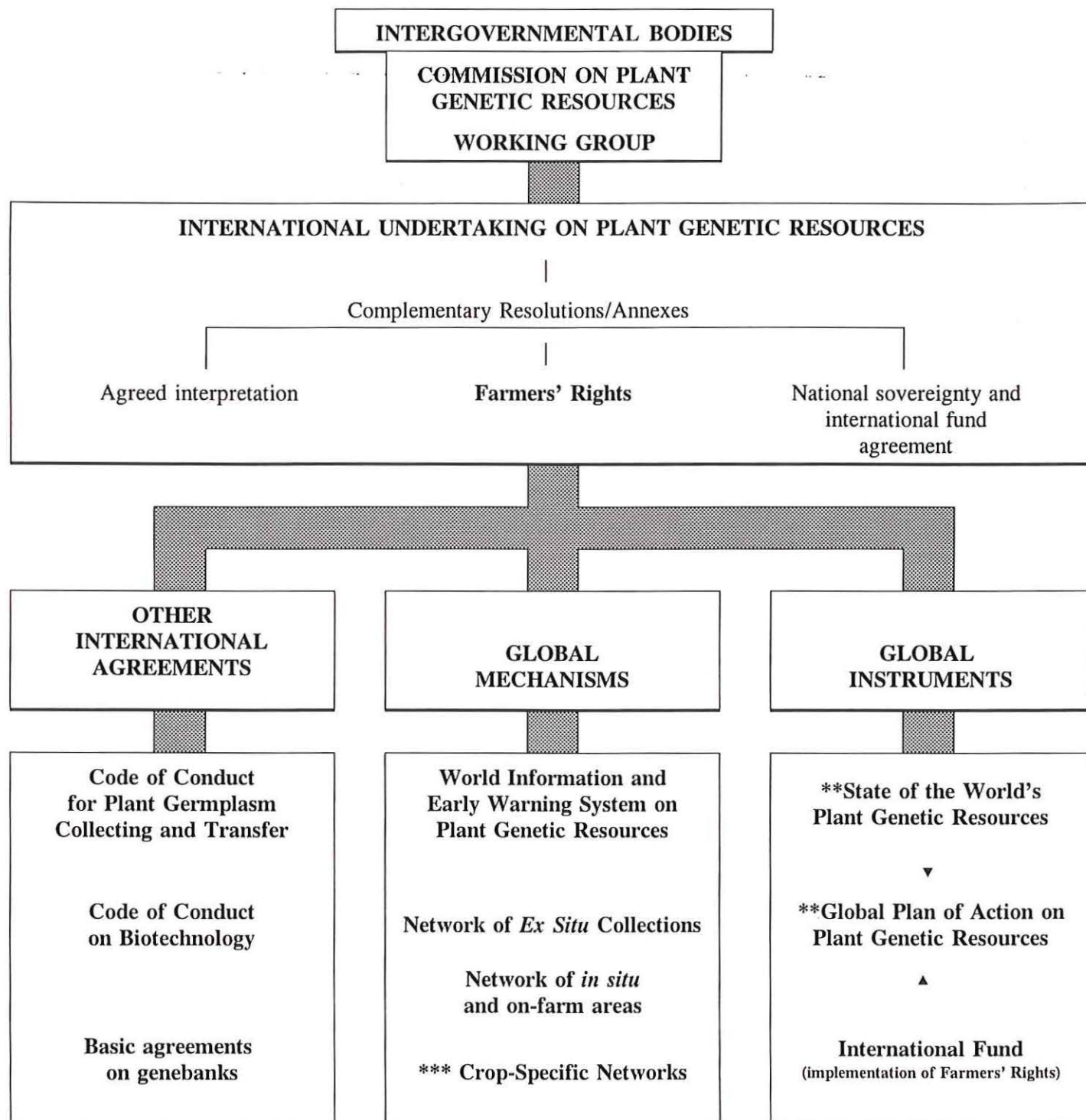
3. In 1992, Agenda 21 of UNCED recommended strengthening and adjusting the Global System and further developing many of its components, in particular: accelerating the development of the World Information and Early Warning System; taking steps to realize Farmers' Rights; developing networks for the *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of plant genetic resources; and preparing periodic reports on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources and a rolling Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources. Resolution 3 of the Nairobi Final Act of the Convention on Biological Diversity (which was negotiated and approved along with the Convention) recognized the Global System as the appropriate framework within which to address outstanding matters regarding plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, including the issues of access to such plant genetic resources and the realization of Farmers' Rights.

4. This document gives an overview of the current state of development of the Global System. Where appropriate, reference is made to documents of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources, which provide more detailed information on specific components of the Global System, and can be made available on request. This document is complemented with two further documents: *Report on the Revision of the International Undertaking* (C 95/INF/19-Sup.1) and a *Report on Preparations for the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources* (C 95/INF/19-Sup.2).

II. THE GLOBAL SYSTEM

5. The objectives of the Global System are to promote the availability and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources while ensuring their safe conservation, for present and future generations, by providing a flexible framework for sharing the benefits and burdens.

THE GLOBAL SYSTEM FOR THE CONSERVATION AND UTILIZATION OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE*



* For illustrative purposes only.

** The first State of the World and Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources are being produced during the preparatory process for the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources.

*** This element has been added since June 1995 following the request of the Sixth Session of the Commission.

6. The System covers the conservation (*ex situ* and *in situ*, including on-farm) and utilization of plant genetic resources (genes, genotypes and gene pools) at molecular, population, species and agro-ecosystem level.

7. The Global System is based on the principles that:

- nations have sovereign rights over the plant genetic resources in their territories;
- plant genetic resources should be available for the benefit of all humanity, on mutually agreed terms, for plant breeding and scientific purposes;
- plant genetic resources, and the information, technologies and funds necessary to conserve and utilize them, are complementary;
- all nations are potential donors and users of plant genetic resources, information, technology and funds;
- the best way to guarantee the maintenance of plant genetic resources is to ensure their effective, sustainable and beneficial utilization, in all countries;
- the farmers of the world have, over the millennia, domesticated, conserved, developed, improved and made available plant genetic resources and continue to do so today;
- advanced technologies and local rural technologies are both important and complementary, for the conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources;
- *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation are complementary strategies for maintaining genetic diversity.

8. One hundred and forty-eight countries and one regional economic integration organization are now formally part of the System, through having joined the Commission, adhered to the Undertaking, or both (see *Appendix I*). The mandate of the Commission includes recommending measures that are necessary or desirable, in order to ensure the comprehensiveness of the Global System, and the efficiency of its operation. In this context, the Sixth Session of the Commission (19-30 June, 1995) discussed a progress report on the Global System, which it considered was - with its component parts - the central, continuously evolving product of the Commission's work and negotiations over the preceding 12 years. It also noted that, in order to comply with the request in Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), that the Global System be strengthened and reviewed, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity, FAO had taken a number of actions: i) two major elements of the Global System (the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources and the Global Plan of Action) were being developed in the context of the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources; ii) the Commission was itself revising the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, in accordance with Conference Resolution 7/93; and iii) other elements of the Global System had been strengthened during the 1994-95 biennium.

III. STATE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE GLOBAL SYSTEM

9. This section briefly describes each element of the Global System and provides information on its state of development and on progress made since the last session of the Conference.

Commission on Plant Genetic Resources: the intergovernmental forum

10. The Commission on Plant Genetic Resources was established on the basis of Resolution 9/83 of the FAO Conference. It is a unique global intergovernmental forum, where countries that are donors and users of germplasm, funds and technology can discuss, on an equal footing, matters related to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and monitor the implementation of the principles contained in the Undertaking. Through its debates, the Commission aims to reach international consensus in areas of global interest. Relevant technical assistance agencies, intergovernmental organizations, development banks, non-governmental organizations and private foundations also attend the sessions of the Commission and report to it on their programmes and activities on plant genetic resources.

Progress since the Twenty-seventh Session

11. Between November 1993 and September 1995, a further 17 countries¹ joined the Commission, bringing its membership to 138.
12. As foreseen in Conference Resolution 7/93 mandating the revision of the International Undertaking, the Commission's Working Group held its Ninth Session on 10-11 May 1994 and an Extraordinary Session on 3-4 November 1994, and an Extraordinary Session of the Commission itself was held on 7-11 November 1994. The report of this Extraordinary Session (with the reports of the two sessions of the Working Group in appendixes) was discussed by the Hundred and Seventh Session of the Council in November 1994. The Tenth Regular Session of the Working Group was held on 3-5 May 1995, and the Sixth Regular Session of the Commission on 19-30 July 1995. These reports are available to the current Session of the Conference.
13. The FAO Secretariat, the Asian Development Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNIDO, the World Bank, WTO, IFAD, UPOV, CIAT, CIFOR, CIMMYT, CIP, ICARDA, ICRAF, ICRISAT, IITA, ILRI, IPGRI, IRRI, WARDA, ACWW, GRAIN and IUCN submitted written reports to the Sixth Session of the Commission,² which welcomed the reports, and stressed the importance of collaboration between organizations. The Commission asked the Secretariat to also invite relevant regional organizations to report to future sessions.
14. The Hundred and Eighth Session of the Council, following comments by the Commission, COAG, COFO and COFI, 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. Conference document C 95/19, *Broadening the mandate of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources*, provides information on this matter.
15. The Sixth Session of the Commission reviewed document CPGR-6/95/4 Annex 1, *Cooperation in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity on matters of interest to the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources*. This document is available to this session of the Conference. The Commission expressed satisfaction at the cooperation developing between FAO and the Secretariat of the Convention. It strongly supported the secondment of an FAO officer to the Secretariat of the Convention, so as to collaborate on matters related to food and agricultural biodiversity. The Commission requested that the report of its session be transmitted for the information of the next session of the Conference of the Parties. It noted that the medium-term Programme of Work of the Conference of the Parties contained an item (5.9), on the "Relationship with the FAO Global System for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture", and requested its Chairman to attend the Second Conference of the Parties and speak on the Global System and the work of the Commission.

Subsidiary body of the Commission: the Working Group

16. In 1985, the Commission established a subsidiary intergovernmental Working Group, which provides guidance to the Secretariat on the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. The Working Group (which typically meets annually) is composed of 23 member countries with a regional balance,³ nominated by the regional groups, in consultation with the Chair of the Working Group. The Chair of the Working Group is elected by the Commission.

¹ Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Burundi, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Gabon, Jamaica, Latvia, Lesotho, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Mongolia, Nepal, Slovakia, South Africa and Viet Nam.

² Documents CPGR-6/95/5.1, *Reports, programmes and activities on plant genetic resources. 1. Report on FAO's activities*, and CPGR-6/95/5.2 and CPGR-6/95/5.2-Add 1, *Reports, programmes and activities on plant genetic resources. 2. Reports on the activities of intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations*.

³ The Working Group is composed of representatives from the following Regional Groups; Asia (4), Latin America and the Caribbean (4), Africa (5), Near East (3), Europe (5), South Western Pacific (1) and North America (1).

Progress since the Twenty-seventh Session

17. Following a recommendation of the Commission, new draft terms of reference and procedures for the Working Group were first discussed by the Working Group, and then presented to the Sixth Session of the Commission,⁴ which, noting that the issues of the broadening of the Commission and the possible nature of its Working Groups would be discussed by the Conference in November 1995, postponed consideration of the matter until its next session.

International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources: the framework agreement

18. The International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources is a non-legally binding instrument, adopted by Conference Resolution 8/83, with reservations by eight countries.⁵ To meet the concerns of the countries that expressed these reservations, the Commission negotiated three complementary resolutions, which interpret and complement the text of the Undertaking. These were unanimously adopted by Conference Resolutions 4/89, 5/89 and 3/91. These resolutions, which are now annexes to the Undertaking, introduce the concepts of Farmers' Rights, national sovereignty over plant genetic resources and an international fund for the implementation of Farmers' Rights.

19. In November 1993, the Twenty-seventh Session of the FAO Conference unanimously adopted Resolution 7/93, which had been negotiated by the Fifth Session of the Commission, calling for the revision of the Undertaking, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Resolution requests that the revision of the Undertaking be negotiated by countries, through regular and extraordinary sessions of the Commission and its Working Group. This revision should include the incorporation of the annexes into the main body of the Undertaking and the negotiation of solutions to outstanding matters, such as access to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and the realization of Farmers' Rights.

Progress since the Twenty-seventh Session

20. The number of countries which have now adhered to the Undertaking is 110. A report on the implementation of Resolution 7/93 is provided in document C 95/INF/19-Sup. 1.

International Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer

21. The International Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer provides a framework which governments may use in developing their national regulations or formulating bilateral agreements on the collection of germplasm, under conditions they determine. The Code is in line with, and fully compatible with, both the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Undertaking. It provides guidelines for the requesting of permits by collectors and for their issuance by state authorities. It sets out the minimum responsibilities of collectors, sponsors, curators and users of collected germplasm, covering both the collecting and transfer of germplasm. The Code was adopted as a voluntary instrument, which could be acceptable to every country, in order to fill gaps, especially pending the revision of the Undertaking. It was agreed that the Code should be adapted to changing needs and circumstances and updated, amended or modified, when appropriate, through the Commission.

22. The development of this Code of Conduct was requested by the Commission in 1989. The text was negotiated during the 1991 and 1993 sessions of the Commission and adopted through Conference Resolution 8/93.

⁴ Document CPGR-6/95/3, *Revision of the terms of reference and procedures of the Working Group*.

⁵ Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Progress since the Twenty-seventh Session

23. The Commission, at its Sixth Session, requested the Secretariat to prepare questionnaires to facilitate the Commission's monitoring function and allow any necessary development, modification and updating of the Code.

Draft Code of Conduct on Biotechnology

24. The Fourth Session of the Commission requested the preparation of a Code of Conduct for Biotechnology as it affects the conservation and use of plant genetic resources. A first draft was presented to the Fifth Session of the Commission in 1993. The draft Code includes provisions to maximize the positive effects of biotechnology and minimize its potentially negative effects, as well as to promote access to relevant biotechnologies and to the plant genetic resources to which they are applied. It also includes provisions for risk assessment and management, particularly with regard to genetically modified organisms related to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

25. The Fifth Session of the Commission recommended that the biosafety component of the draft Code be considered an input to the work of the governing body of the Convention on Biological Diversity on this subject and "that FAO participate in this work, in order to ensure that the aspects of biosafety in relation to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture are appropriately covered". It also suggested "that FAO further develop the remaining components of the draft Code". The Commission recommended that the implications of biotechnological developments for the availability of and access to plant genetic resources, genetic erosion, technology transfer, and positive or negative socio-economic development, should be reviewed and analysed. The Commission's recommendations were endorsed by the Twenty-seventh Session of the Conference.

Progress since the Twenty-seventh Session

26. FAO transmitted the biosafety component of the draft Code to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity as an input to its discussions on a possible biosafety protocol to the Convention. In its turn, the first Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention requested its Secretariat to invite FAO to assist these discussions. The Secretary of the Commission attended an open-ended intergovernmental group of experts in July 1995, to discuss the need and possible modalities of such a protocol.

27. The Sixth Session of the Commission considered document CPGR-6/95/15, *Recent international developments of relevance to the draft Code of Conduct for Plant Biotechnology*. The Commission agreed to postpone any further development of the draft Code until after the current negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking were over. The Commission requested that cooperation continue between FAO and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, on the possible development of a protocol on biosafety and requested that document CPGR-6/95/15 be transmitted to the Secretariat of the Convention.

Network of *ex situ* collections: international agreements on genebanks

28. A network of *ex situ* collections under the auspices and/or jurisdiction of FAO is being developed, in implementation of Article 7 of the Undertaking, with the technical assistance of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI). Over 30 countries and 13 institutions have expressed their willingness to put their base collections under the auspices of FAO and others have offered space in their genebanks to store international collections.

29. The last session of the Conference was informed that the Commission was discussing a draft agreement presented by IPGRI on behalf of the Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agriculture (CGIAR) to put their collections under the auspices of FAO. The Conference recommended that the agreement be finalized on the basis of the Commission's comments. The Commission also agreed a draft set of standards for genebanks.

Progress since the Twenty-seventh Session

30. After detailed discussions by the Commission and its Working Group in October 1994, 12 CGIAR Centres signed agreements with FAO putting "designated" accessions stored in their *ex situ* collections under the auspices of FAO. Under these agreements, the CGIAR Centres recognize "the intergovernmental authority of FAO and its Commission in setting policies for the International Network", and accept a number of responsibilities and obligations, in particular, to hold designated germplasm "in trust for the benefit of the international community", and "not to claim ownership, or seek intellectual property rights over the designated germplasm and related information". The Centres have also agreed to maintain their genebanks according to the standards endorsed by the Commission.⁶ In addition, FAO and IPGRI are jointly preparing standards for *in vitro* collections and for field genebanks, as well as guidelines for the regeneration of stored material, for the consideration of and possible approval by the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources. A joint study of CGIAR genebanks' operation is being undertaken. Discussions with the CGIAR Centres continue regarding implementation of the agreements.

31. A detailed report⁷ on the current state of implementation of the Network was presented to the Sixth Session of the Commission. The Commission welcomed the agreements and agreed that the Secretariat should go ahead with the negotiation of agreements for the designation of national collections using, as appropriate, the agreements that had been revised to bring them into line with the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Commission agreed that the duration of the agreements should be short, to allow for their possible revision, in light of the outcome of the ongoing negotiations to revise the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources. The Commission recommended that IPGRI prepare an in-depth study of various possible systems to regulate access and the sharing of benefits, which would be compatible with the Convention on Biological Diversity, analysed in terms of their likely efficiency, practicality and cost-effectiveness.

Network of *in situ* conservation areas

32. There has been little concrete progress in the establishment of the *in situ* network requested by the Commission, which would cover the "on-farm" conservation of crops and *in situ* conservation of wild relatives of cultivated plants. The Sixth Session of the Commission recommended that the agenda of the 1997 FAO Worldwide Technical Consultation on Protected Areas include a review of the role of protected areas in the *in situ* conservation of the full range of plant and animal genetic resources (including wild crop relatives), and that it help identify technical criteria for the establishment of the network and develop guidelines in this respect. The Global Plan of Action being prepared within the context of the Fourth International Conference on Plant Genetic Resources will advance the development of the network.

World Information and Early Warning System: facilitating exchange of information and technology

33. The World Information and Early Warning System (WIEWS) on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was established in conformity with Articles 7.1 (e) and (f) of the

⁶ FAO/IPGRI, 1994, *Genebanks Standards*.

⁷ Document CPGR-6/95/12, *Progress report on the International network of Ex Situ Germplasm Collections under the Auspices and/or Jurisdiction of FAO*.

Undertaking. The WIEWS collects, disseminates and facilitates the exchange of data and information on plant genetic resources and related technologies. It is also intended to rapidly alert the international community to hazards threatening the loss of *ex situ* and *in situ* plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, so as to make remedial action possible.

Progress since the Twenty-seventh Session

34. In line with the recommendations of UNCED's Agenda 21, FAO has accelerated the development of the WIEWS during the last biennium. It has also verified and updated, through appropriate questionnaires, a substantial part of the information maintained in the WIEWS databases. Currently, the *ex situ* database contains data on over 4.5 million plant genetic accessions, held in some 1 220 *ex situ* collections around the world. The country profile database contains information on the structure of national plant genetic resource programmes and activities of over 190 countries. The seed sources database contains the addresses of about 8 000 seed-supplying institutions around the world, as well as data on activities and crop coverage. The crop variety database contains information on commercial crop varieties. The database of databases on national and international systems has been developed since November 1993, following the recommendations of the Fifth Session of the Commission, endorsed by the Conference; it provides information on individual databases and a guide of how to obtain information from them. The data maintained in the WIEWS provides a major input to the preparation of the first report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources.

35. Detailed information on the development of the WIEWS was presented to the Sixth Session of the Commission.⁸ The Commission suggested that FAO and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity work together on the possible access by the Convention's Clearing House Mechanism to the WIEWS databases, which focus specifically on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

Crop-related networks

36. A number of global and regional crop-related networks covering a large variety of cultivated species, being established in close collaboration with FAO Regional Offices and relevant scientific organizations, promote a coordinated approach to identifying, evaluating and conserving the genetic variability of selected crop species, with the aim of its utilization for the improvement of cultivars, and adaptation to farmers' needs.

37. The Sixth Session of the Commission recognized that the crop-related networks were a useful approach to integrating activities on plant genetic resources, and suggested that they be regarded as part of the Global System, in order to strengthen practical linkages between the conservation and utilization of crop genetic resources, at field level.

Periodic Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources: facilitating the Commission's monitoring function

38. The Third Session of the Commission "*recommended* that the Secretariat should periodically prepare a Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, with the cooperation of other bodies concerned. The Report should analyse the current plant genetic resources situation, and describe activities and programmes being carried out by regional, international and non-

⁸ Documents CPGR-6/95/13, *Progress Report on the World Information and Early Warning System on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* and CPGR-6/95/8 Annex, *Survey of existing data on ex situ collections of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*.

governmental organizations, with the aim of identifying gaps, constraints and emergency situations; this would allow the Commission to recommend priorities and ways of harmonizing the overall effort."

39. The Commission agreed that the periodically updated Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources should utilize data maintained in the WIEWS as a major source of information, and that, *vice versa*, the information generated during the production of these reports should be stored in the WIEWS. The Commission also agreed that the needs, emergencies and priorities identified in the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources would provide the basis for the operation and periodic updating of the Global Plan of Action.

Progress since the Twenty-seventh Session

40. The first Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources is currently being prepared through a country-driven process leading to the Fourth International Technical Conference.

41. The Sixth Session of the Commission discussed and revised an outline for the Report of the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources.⁹ Detailed information on the outline of the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources, as agreed by the Commission is given in document C 95/INF/19-Sup.2.

Global Plan of Action: facilitating the Commission's coordinating function

42. The Commission requested the development of a rolling Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, with programmes and activities aimed at filling in gaps, overcoming constraints and facing emergency situations identified in the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources. The periodically updated Plan will permit the Commission to recommend priorities and to promote the rationalization and coordination of efforts.

43. In 1991, the Commission agreed that the Global Plan of Action should include "a general budget, as well as priority programmes and projects, to be financed, on a step-by-step basis, through the International Fund for Plant Genetic Resources, and to be implemented by appropriate agencies and organizations, under the supervision of the Commission." The Commission also "suggested that the major parties involved in the implementation of the Plan should be involved in its preparation, so as to ensure effective coordination, and to avoid the danger of duplication of activities and waste of resources."

44. The Commission also agreed that the first costed Global Plan of Action would be prepared together with the first State of the World on Plant Genetic Resources in the country-driven process leading to the Fourth International Technical Conference and "recommended that the Technical Conference be followed by a meeting to define the financial commitments needed for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, and the terms and conditions of financing."

45. In 1993, the Fifth Session of the Commission "agreed that the Global Plan of Action would identify the activities, projects and programmes needed to overcome present constraints, in line with the relevant parts of Agenda 21. By financing the Global Plan of Action, through the International Fund and other funding mechanisms, as foreseen in Resolution 3/91, the international community would contribute to the practical realization of Farmers' Rights."

⁹ Document CPGR-6/95/10, *Outline of the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*.

Progress since the Twenty-seventh Session

46. The first Plan of Action is being developed, under the guidance of the Commission, in the context of the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, through a country-driven process, including regional and sub-regional meetings. The Sixth Session of the Commission discussed and revised an outline of the Global Plan of Action.¹⁰ The outline Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources agreed by the Commission, as well as a report on its preparation, is presented in document C 95/INF/19-Sup.2.

International Fund for Plant Genetic Resources: ensuring funding

47. Following negotiations carried out through the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources, the 1991 Conference unanimously adopted Resolution 3/91,¹¹ which agreed "that Farmers' Rights will be implemented through an international fund on plant genetic resources which will support plant genetic conservation and utilization programmes". The Resolution also agreed that the International Fund "should be substantial, sustainable and based on the principles of equity and transparency" and "that through the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources, the donors of genetic resources, funds and technology will determine and oversee the policies, programmes and priorities of the fund and other funding mechanisms, with the advice of the appropriate bodies".

48. The International Fund is expected to become a key mechanism for sharing benefits and a critical element in ensuring the equitability of the Global System. The Fund will provide a channel for countries, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, private industry and individuals to support conservation and promote the use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture on a sustainable basis, at all levels. The Fund has not yet been established and matters related to its legal status, policies, priorities and parties are still under discussion, as part of the current negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking.

Progress since the Twenty-seventh Session

49. Further progress in the establishment and operation of the International Fund is dependent on the success of the negotiations among countries on the revision of the International Undertaking, which includes the realization of Farmers' Rights. The development of the Global Plan of Action will contribute to determining the actual magnitude of the financial needs. A number of documents prepared by the Secretariat to facilitate current negotiations were presented to the Sixth Session of the Commission.¹²

¹⁰ Document CPGR-6/95/6, *Progress report on the preparatory process of the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources* and document CPGR-6/95/11, *Outline of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

¹¹ It should be noted that the international fund referred to in Resolution 3/91 is not the "International Fund for Plant Genetic Resources" established by FAO in 1988, on an interim basis.

¹² Document CPGR-6/95/8, *Revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources. Issues for consideration in Stage II: access to plant genetic resources, and Farmers Rights* (especially para. 14 and 24-55) provided details on the current status of negotiations related to the establishment of the Fund and identified questions to be resolved. These include the nature of the funding (voluntary or mandatory); the question of linkage between the financial responsibilities and the benefits derived from the use of plant genetic resources and the question of who should bear financial responsibilities (countries, users or consumers). They also include how the relative needs and entitlements of beneficiaries, especially developing countries, are to be estimated and how farmers and local communities may benefit from the funding. Document CPGR-6/95/8 Supp., *Revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources. Analysis of some technical, economic and legal aspects for consideration in Stage II*, (especially paras 7-18 and 24-32, as well as Appendixes I and III) and a number of background study papers provided the Commission with technical information on, and analysis of, various economic and legal aspects and possible options, as the basis for negotiations towards resolution of the pending issues related to the establishment and operation of the Fund. The institutional aspects of the Fund are discussed in document CPGR-6/95/9, *Revision of the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources. Stage III - Legal and institutional matters* (especially paras 23-25).

IV. CONCLUSION

50. Since the last session of the FAO Conference, the FAO Secretariat has redoubled its efforts to strengthen and adjust the FAO Global System on Plant Genetic Resources for food and agriculture, following the recommendations of UNCED's Agenda 21 and the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Much of the effort has concentrated on the negotiations for the revision of the International Undertaking, including the realization of Farmers' Rights; and on the preparation of the first report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources and the first Global Plan of Action, through a country-driven process leading to the Fourth International Technical Conference. The Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer, as adopted by the Conference, has been widely distributed. Progress made in the development of the International Network of *ex situ* collections includes the signing of agreements between FAO and twelve International Agricultural Research Centres, through which the centres have placed the collections maintained in their genebanks under the auspices of FAO. Significant progress has also been made in the development of the WIEWS.

51. The Sixth Session of the Commission considered its work programme at length, and agreed that there should be two extraordinary one-week sessions, one in early 1996, mainly to finalize preparations for the Fourth International Technical Conference, and another in late 1996, to continue the process for the revision of the International Undertaking. It urged the Secretariat to secure the additional resources required for these two sessions from the FAO Regular Programme budget. (See document C 95/INF/19-Sup.1 for more detailed information on proposed sessions and budgetary implications.)

APPENDIX 1
MEMBERS OF FAO COMMISSION ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
AND/OR COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE ADHERED TO THE
INTERNATIONAL UNDERTAKING ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES

(August 1995)

AFRICA	ASIA AND THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC	EUROPE	LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
Algeria 1/2	Australia 1/2	Albania 1/	Antigua and
Angola 1/2	Bangladesh 1/2	Austria 1/2	Barbuda 2/
Benin 1/2	China, People's Rep. of 1/	Belgium 1/2	Argentina 1/2
Botswana 1/	Democrat. People's Rep. of	Bulgaria 1/2	Bahamas 1/2
Burundi 1/	Korea 1/2	Croatia 1/	Barbados 1/2
Burkina Faso 1/2	Fiji 2/	Cyprus 1/2	Belize 1/2
Cameroon 1/2	India 1/2	Czech Republic 1/2	Bolivia 1/2
Cape Verde 1/2	Indonesia 1/	Denmark 1/2	Brazil 1/
Central African	Japan 1/	Estonia 1/	Chile 1/2
Rep. 1/2	Korea, Rep. of 1/2	European Community 1/	Colombia 1/2
Chad 1/2	Malaysia 1/	Finland 1/2	Costa Rica 1/2
Congo 1/2	Maldives, Rep	France 1/2	Cuba 1/2
Côte d'Ivoire 2/	of 1/	Germany 1/2	Dominica 1/2
Equatorial	Mongolia 1/	Greece 1/2	Dominican Rep. 1/2
Guinea 1/2	Myanmar 1/	Hungary 1/2	Ecuador 1/2
Ethiopia 1/2	Nepal 1/2	Iceland 1/2	El Salvador 1/2
Gabon 1/2	New Zealand 1/2	Ireland 1/2	Grenada 1/2
Gambia 1/	Pakistan 1/	Israel 1/2	Guatemala 1/
Ghana 1/2	Philippines 1/2	Italy 1/2	Guyana 1/
Guinea 1/2	Samoa 1/2	Latvia 1/	Haiti 1/2
Guinea-Bissau 1/	Solomon Islands 2/	Liechtenstein 2/	Honduras 1/2
Kenya 1/2	Sri Lanka 1/2	Lithuania 1/	Jamaica 1/2
Lesotho 1/	Thailand 1/	Malta 1/	Mexico 1/2
Liberia 1/2	Tonga 2/	Netherlands 1/2	Nicaragua 1/2
Madagascar 1/2	Vanuatu 1/	Norway 1/2	Panama 1/2
Malawi 1/2	Vietnam 1/	Poland 1/2	Paraguay 2/
Mali 1/2		Portugal 1/2	Peru 1/2
Mauritania 1/2	NEAR EAST	Romania 1/2	Saint Christopher
Mauritius 1/2	Afghanistan 1/	Russia 2/	and Nevis 1/
Morocco 1/2	Bahrain 2/	Spain 1/2	Saint Lucia 1/
Mozambique 2/	Egypt 1/2	Slovak Republic 1/	Saint Vincent and
Niger 1/2	Iran, Islamic	Sweden 1/2	the Grenadines 1/
Rwanda 1/2	Rep. of 1/2	Switzerland 1/2	Suriname 1/
Senegal 1/2	Iraq 1/2	Turkey 1/2	Trinidad and
Sierra Leone 1/2	Jordan 1/	United Kingdom 1/2	Tobago 1/2
South Africa 1/2	Kuwait 2/	Yugoslavia 1/2	Uruguay 1/
Sudan 1/2	Lebanon 1/2		Venezuela 1/
Tanzania 1/2	Libya 1/2		
Togo 1/2	Oman 2/		NORTH AMERICA
Uganda 1/	Syria 1/2		Canada 1/
Zaire 1/	Tunisia 1/2		United States of
Zambia 1/2	Yemen 1/2		America 1/
Zimbabwe 1/2			

1/ Members of the Commission.

2/ Countries which have adhered to the International Undertaking.

The above totals 149 countries and Regional Economic Integration Organizations which have become members of the Commission on Plant Genetic Resources (138) or which have adhered to the International Undertaking (110).

