

October 2005



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للأمم المتحدة

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农业组织

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l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
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Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## Item 5 of the Draft Provisional Agenda

### COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

#### WORKING GROUP ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Third Session

Rome, 26 – 28 October 2005

#### SUMMARY REPORT OF A WORKSHOP FOR COUNTRIES OF WEST ASIA AND THE ARABIAN PENINSULA: TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE – CREATING AN “INTERSECTORAL” DIALOGUE ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES CONSERVATION, BREEDING AND SEEDS

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APPENDIX A: AGENDA OF THE WORKSHOP

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is a permanent forum where governments discuss and negotiate matters relevant to genetic resources for food and agriculture. Its main objectives are to ensure the conservation and sustainable utilization of genetic resources for food and agriculture, as well the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use, for present and future generations. During its Tenth Regular Session<sup>1</sup>, the Commission called for regional meetings in support of certain elements of its work programme relating to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), in particular supporting components of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

2. FAO and the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) organized a workshop in Amman, Jordan on 5-7 February 2005 on Technical Support to the International Treaty for Creating an "Intersectoral" Dialogue on Plant Genetic Resources Conservation, Breeding and Seeds. The agenda is presented in Appendix A below. The Workshop was placed under the patronage of HE the Minister of Agriculture Mr. Sharary Shakhanbeh. It was attended by 34 senior seed and plant genetic resources officials representing 13 countries of the West Asia and Arabian Peninsula regions (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Pakistan and Iran). One representative for plant genetic resources and one representative for seeds from each country were invited to participate, as well as relevant international organisations. The list of participants is presented in Appendix B. The Workshop was funded by the Government of Norway and by FAO.

3. Dr. Fardous, Director General of Jordan's National Center for Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer (NCARTT), on behalf of HE the Minister, welcomed the participants and thanked ICARDA and FAO for choosing Jordan to launch the process. Dr. Madkour, Director of International Cooperation at ICARDA, stressed the importance of the initiatives to be addressed by the Workshop and expressed the readiness of ICARDA to join efforts with FAO and other organizations in helping countries in Central and West Asia and North Africa in the development and implementation of initiatives related to PGRFA conservation and sustainable use. Dr. Fraleigh welcomed the participants on behalf of FAO.

4. FAO presented a global overview of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the objectives of the workshop, which were: to create an intersectoral dialogue on PGRFA conservation, breeding and seeds in the region's countries and sub-regions; to present revised Indicators and Reporting Format for monitoring implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of PGRFA and the computerized tools developed to assist countries in carrying out such monitoring; and to discuss draft Guidelines for the development of Country Reports as a contribution to preparation of the second Report on the State of the World's PGRFA.

5. Dr. Amri (ICARDA) presented the status of PGRFA in the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region and Dr. Fraleigh (FAO) presented the main features of the International Treaty. Information was also presented on the recommendations of the October 2004 meeting of an expert group on the terms of the International Treaty's standard Material Transfer Agreement<sup>2</sup>, the Syrian draft legislation on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing (ABS), and the

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, Tenth Regular Session Rome, 8 - 12 November 2004, document CGRFA-10/04/REP.

<sup>2</sup> See *Report on the Outcome of the Expert Group on the Terms of the Standard Material Transfer Agreement*, Second Meeting of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture acting as the Interim Committee for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, November 2004, document CGRFA/IC/MTA-1/04/REP.

recommendations of the thematic meeting of the regional Dryland Agrobiodiversity Project on the development of national policies and legislation related to conservation and ABS.

## **2. MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF PGRFA**

6. FAO presented the Global Plan of Action and how its implementation can be monitored. The Global Plan of Action was developed under the guidance of the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, through a country-driven preparatory process. It was adopted in 1996 by 150 countries at the Fourth International Technical Conference. The Global Plan of Action comprises twenty priority activity areas, covering *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, plant genetic resources utilization (especially in plant breeding and seed systems), and institutions and capacity-building. The International Technical Conference agreed that governments would monitor and guide overall progress, through the Commission on Genetic Resources. The Global Plan of Action is now also a supporting component of the International Treaty.

7. During its Tenth Regular Session in November 2004, the Commission recognized the importance of an efficient system for monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, in terms of planning, setting priorities, and achieving the mobilisation of financial resources to support national plant genetic resource programmes. The Commission adopted indicators and a reporting format for monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, culminating in the establishment of national information-sharing mechanisms. It supported the application of the new monitoring approach to all countries, in view of the integration of these monitoring activities with the preparation of the second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

8. FAO presented the new approach for monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, as well as the tools developed to assist countries to apply the new monitoring approach, including the indicators and reporting format, the computer application and guidelines for managing a country-led participatory process. These were also discussed in two concurrent break-out sessions. Participants were also briefed about the results achieved implementing the new monitoring approach in other regions and were given a demonstration of the resulting web-based national information systems.

## **3. PREPARATION OF THE SECOND REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S PGRFA**

9. FAO presented the Report on the State of the World's PGRFA and the process of preparation of Country Reports contributing to the development of the second Report. In 1989, 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 analyze the current plant genetic resources situation, and describe activities and programmes being carried out by regional, international and non-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". The first Report was prepared for the Fourth International Technical Conference, held in 1996, which welcomed it as the first comprehensive worldwide assessment of the status and use of PGRFA. The Report is now also a supporting component of the International Treaty.

10. At its Tenth Session, the Commission agreed that the second Report should provide objective information and analysis, and should identify priorities, as a basis for updating the rolling Global Plan of Action. The Commission encouraged Members and other countries and relevant organizations to participate in the preparatory process. It adopted steps for preparing the second Report, on the basis that it would be completed in 2008. It confirmed that the preparatory process for the second Report should be fully integrated into the process of monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. The Commission approved a list of thematic

background studies for the second Report. It called upon donor countries and international organizations to assist, by providing the financial resources required for the full participation of all countries in the preparation of the second Report, including in the monitoring of the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. The Commission took note of draft Guidelines for Country Reports presented by FAO<sup>3</sup>, and observed that these should be further considered and refined at regional meetings, before their finalization.

11. FAO presented the steps for preparing the second Report, including the revised time line. Particular emphasis was placed on the preparation of Country Reports as an essential participative, country-driven foundation for the development of the second Report. The draft Guidelines for the preparation of Country Reports were presented and discussed in detail. Aspects concerning the sustainable use of PGRFA in seed systems were highlighted. The preparation of the Country Reports should benefit greatly from the information obtained during national monitoring of implementation of the Global Plan of Action, and the draft Guidelines were written in way to facilitate this synergy. FAO invited input and comment from the countries and workshop participants to finalize the Guidelines.

#### **4. GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST**

12. The Secretariat of the Global Crop Diversity Trust presented the objectives of the Trust and the steps towards the development of regional and crop conservation strategies. The Global Crop Diversity Trust aims to match the long term nature of conservation needs with long term secure and sustainable funding. At its centre will be an endowment that would provide a permanent source of funding for crop diversity collections around the world. The Trust is an element of the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty.

13. The Trust envisages two complementary approaches to identifying and prioritizing eligible PGRFA for upgrading and long-term conservation. One approach is to identify key *ex situ* collections of globally important crops on a region-by-region basis. The other is to prioritize collections for funding on a crop-by-crop basis at the global level. Together, the two approaches will contribute to the establishment of a rational global system for the conservation of important crop diversity. This process will bring together the managers of PGRFA, and other experts, in developed and developing countries to describe and implement the most efficient and effective strategies for ensuring the long-term conservation, regeneration, characterization, evaluation, documentation and availability of the crops that are vital to the world's food security. The Workshop discussed the development of a regional strategy for the WANA region.

#### **5. ASSESSING AND STRENGTHENING NATIONAL PLANT BREEDING AND BIOTECHNOLOGY CAPACITY**

14. During its Tenth Regular Session, the Commission considered the assessment of national capacities and priorities in plant breeding, and specific training to strengthen such capacity, including the use of appropriate biotechnologies. Several Member countries stated that plant breeding is a major issue for developing countries, and stressed the need to strengthen plant breeding capacity.

15. FAO presented the objectives, methodology and expected results of a survey to assess national capacities and priorities in plant breeding and biotechnology, to increase the sustainable use of PGRFA. This initiative was discussed by the Workshop participants.

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<sup>3</sup> *Draft Country Guidelines for the Second State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Tenth Regular Session, Rome, 8 - 12 November 2004, document CGRFA-10/04/Inf.8

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

16. The four initiatives were amply discussed during the plenary and the concurrent sessions that were held following the various presentations. The participants agreed the main recommendations of the Workshop presented below.
17. General recommendations:
  - a. Consistent with the decisions taken by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the participants welcome the initiatives presented and discussed at the Workshop (i.e. monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action; preparation of the second Report on the State of World's PGRFA; the Global Crop Diversity Trust; and the assessment of breeding and biotechnology capacities) and encourage the countries in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula to be fully involved in these efforts;
  - b. The level of attention and priority to be given to this region for all these initiatives should be strengthened;
  - c. Countries need to respond to national and regional research and development priorities, allocate resources for conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, and develop mechanisms for equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of PGRFA at national and regional levels;
  - d. Regional integration and networking should be enhanced;
  - e. More emphasis is needed on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action;
  - f. FAO should address letters to governments to confirm and/or nominate national focal points for PGRFA and seeds and to encourage the countries to establish national PGR committees including key stakeholders;
  - g. PGRFA policies, legislations and activities need to be harmonized within and among countries (development of a model and framework);
  - h. Regional and international organizations involved in PGRFA activities should be full partners in the implementation of these initiatives;
  - i. FAO, ICARDA, the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA), the Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), AODA, and the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), are requested to assist countries implementing these initiatives; and
  - j. Financial support from bilateral and multilateral donors should be provided in order to be able to conduct these initiatives.
18. Recommendations on monitoring implementation of the Global Plan of Action:
  - a. Considering the need to mobilise resources to carry out this activity at national level, participants asked FAO to take direct action in helping the countries to monitor implementation of the Global Plan of Action;
  - b. Country representatives requested FAO to include some countries in the West Asia – North Africa (WANA) region in the 2005 plan of work for monitoring GPA implementation;
  - c. National training workshops need to be conducted on use of the indicators and reporting format adopted by the Commission for monitoring implementation of the Global Plan of Action, and on the computer application developed for managing such information; and

- d. The importance of taking advantage of existing databases and results of projects such as the West Asia Dryland Agrobiodiversity Project while monitoring the Global Plan of Action was underlined.
19. Recommendations on the preparation of the second Report on the State of World's PGRFA:
- a. FAO should write to governments (Ministries of Agriculture or other institutions as specified by the countries) to encourage them to prepare Country Reports and monitor their implementation of the Global Plan of Action;
  - b. FAO's technical assistance and its assistance in providing and mobilizing financial support to countries is highly needed to produce Country Reports;
  - c. Experience of projects such as West Asia Dryland Agrobiodiversity Project should be taken into account or included in monitoring and in Country Reports;
  - d. Countries are encouraged to provide feedback to FAO on the draft Guidelines to prepare country reports before 31st March, 2005 (participants are encouraged to provide their comments).
20. Recommendations on the Global Crop Diversity Trust:
- a. All WANA countries are encouraged to get involved in the development of the regional WANA strategy and relevant global crop strategies for the *ex situ* conservation of the crops in Annex 1 of the International Treaty and identify priorities guiding the allocation of funds from the Trust;
  - b. National, regional and international organizations/collections should seek to develop an effective and efficient system for the conservation of the priority collections identified by the conservation strategies with a role for the CGIAR centers;
  - c. AARINENA is requested to manage, in collaboration and with the technical assistance from regional and international organizations involved in PGRFA (including ICARDA and IPGRI), the process for the development of the WANA conservation strategy and will ensure the participation of all WANA countries in the process.
21. Recommendations on assessing breeding and biotechnology capacities:
- a. Countries should request to FAO to be part of the assessment of the breeding and biotechnology activities and in developing national biosafety regulations and legislation;
  - b. Countries and FAO are encouraged to collaborate with ICARDA and other institutions already involved in the evaluation of national breeding and biotechnology activities;
  - c. The assessment is encouraged to give attention to germplasm enhancement activities using PGRFA;
  - d. Seed systems should be given due importance in the PGRFA conservation and sustainable use.
22. Other recommendations:
- a. The Palestinian Authority should be an integral part of all the initiatives and efforts discussed during the Workshop;
  - b. Special assistance is requested for the conflict and post-conflict countries (Afghanistan and Iraq);

- c. Countries are encouraged to provide their comments on the International Treaty's draft standard Material Transfer Agreement to their Regional Chairs. Six technical experts and six legal advisors need to be nominated for the Contact Group negotiating the standard MTA;
- d. Mechanisms need to be designed for benefit sharing at national and regional levels and to harmonize PGRFA access and benefit-sharing activities and legislations with those in other sectors, taking the advantage of the Syrian experience;
- e. FAO should consider providing legal and technical assistance for the development of national legislation on access and benefit-sharing and Farmers' Rights, when requested;
- f. AARINENA, ICARDA and IPGRI and other regional organizations should become involved in the implementation of Global Crop Diversity Trust and the production of the second Report on the State of World's PGRFA.

23. During the closing session, the participants extended their thanks and appreciation to the government of Norway for the financial support of the Workshop, to FAO and ICARDA for its organization, and the Government of Jordan for hosting the Workshop. Thanks were also extended to Prof. Dr. Mahmud Duwayri, Dr. Brad Fraleigh and Dr. Ahmed Amri for their valuable inputs for the success of the Workshop and to the ICARDA-West Asia Regional Program staff for making all necessary arrangements. FAO thanked the participants for very interactive discussions of the initiatives and ICARDA for co-organizing the workshop. ICARDA thanked FAO for choosing ICARDA as a partner in launching the process in West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula and reiterated their keen interest in continuing the partnership with FAO and the Global Crop Diversity Trust in the implementation of the initiatives in the region.



**APPENDIX A****Technical Support to the International Treaty on  
Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture – Creating an  
“Intersectoral” Dialogue on PGRFA Conservation, Breeding and Seeds  
for West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula**

Amman, Jordan

5-7 February, 2005

**Agenda of the Workshop****SATURDAY 5 February 2005****Opening Session**

- 09:00 – 09:30 Introduction by Dr. Ahmed Amri  
Mr. Ahmed El-Miniawy, FAO Representative for Jordan  
Dr Magdy Madkour, Director - International Cooperation, ICARDA  
Dr. A.N. Fardous on behalf of H.E. The Minister of Agriculture of Jordan
- 09:30 – 10:00 Global Overview of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture  
Presented by Dr. Brad Fraleigh, FAO
- 10:00 – 10:30 Refreshment Break

**Session Two: Chairperson: Dr. Magdy Madkour**

- 10:30 – 11:00 Situation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in the Region  
Presented by Dr. Ahmed Amri and Prof. Mahmud Duwayri
- 11:00 – 11:30 International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture  
Presented by Dr. Brad Fraleigh, FAO
- 11:30 – 13:00 Recent Developments concerning the International Treaty
- Recommendations of Brussels meeting on the Material Transfer Agreement by Dr. M. Al Fayyad
  - Summary of meeting on national legislation and policies on access and benefit-sharing (ABS) by Prof. Mahmud Duwayri
  - national legislation and policies on access and benefit-sharing (ABS).  
Presentation of draft PGR access legislation developed in Syria by Dr. Walid Tawil
- 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break

**Session Three: Chairperson: Dr. Brad Fraleigh**

- 14:00 – 15:15 Global Crop Diversity Trust  
Presented by Ms. Brigitte Laliberté  
Resource Person: Dr. Brad Fraleigh

Discussion points:

- eligibility for funding
- development of regional and crop strategies

15:15- 15:45 Refreshment Break

15:45 – 16:30 Monitoring Implementation of the Global Plan of Action

Presented by Mr. Stefano Diulgheroff, FAO

Establishment of break-out groups for tomorrow meeting

### **SUNDAY 6 February 2005**

08:30 – 10:00 Concurrent Groups

Moderators: S.Diulgheroff, B.Fraleigh

Monitoring Implementation of the Global Plan of Action

10:00 – 10:30 Refreshment Break

### **Session Four: Chairperson: Dr. Abdelnabi Fardous**

10:30 – 13:00 Plenary

Monitoring Implementation of the Global Plan of Action:

- Demonstration of computer application

Resource Person: Mr. Stefano Diulgheroff, FAO

13:00 – 14:00 LUNCH

14:00 – 16:30 Second Report on the State of the World's PGRFA

Presented by Dr. Brad Fraleigh, FAO

Discussion points:

- draft Guidelines for Country Reports
- process of preparation of Country Reports

### **MONDAY 7 February 2005**

#### **Chairperson: Professor Mahmud Duwayri**

8:30 – 9:30 Survey of National Capacities and Priorities in Plant Breeding, including Associated Capacities in Biotechnologies

Presented by Dr. Brad Fraleigh on behalf of Dr. Elcio Guimaraes, FAO

9:30 – 12:30 Discussion of draft recommendations and closing session.

**APPENDIX B****Technical Support to the International Treaty on  
Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) – Creating an  
“Intersectoral” Dialogue on PGRFA Conservation, Breeding and Seeds  
for West Asia and Arabian Peninsula**

Amman, Jordan  
5 - 7 February 2005

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