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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

WORKING GROUP ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Third Session

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CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT THE UTILIZATION OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

ADDITIONAL REPORTS FROM ORGANIZATIONS

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. In order for the Working Group to have a broad overview of the work undertaken by international organizations in the area of capacity-building activities to support the utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, this document incorporates the activity reports sent by some organizations after the finalization of the information document CGRFA/WG-PGR-3/05/Inf.8, thus complementing it. FAO has compiled the reports as submitted, except for ISTA and Slow Food reports where respectively the most relevant table and sections have been extracted. Each report is fully the responsibility of the organization submitting it.

2. REPORTS FROM ORGANIZATIONS

A. INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS (IFOAM)

2. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) is the worldwide umbrella organization uniting over 750 member organizations and institutions in some 103 countries[1].

3. The federation's activities on genetic resources are integrated into work around biodiversity, and IFOAM actively cooperates on this issue with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) in Germany. These organizations have held two international conferences (1999 and 2002) on the relationship between organic agriculture and biodiversity. Conference proceedings have been published and are available from IFOAM. In September 2004, the organizations joined forces with UNEP for the 3rd International Conference on Biodiversity in Nairobi, Kenya.

4. In regard to genetic resources and food, IFOAM is engaged in the drafting of a chapter on biodiversity for the IFOAM Basic Standards. A task force of experts is coordinating this latter activity.

5. The federation has published a comprehensive four-page brochure on the relationship of organic agriculture and biodiversity, which is available on the web site or at request from the Head Office.

6. IFOAM is also cooperating on biodiversity-related matters with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In July of 2004, the federation, along with the FAO and the International Seed Federation (ISF), successfully organized the 1st International Conference on Organic Seeds, bringing 270 participants from 57 countries to the FAO Headquarters in Rome. Among the key themes were biodiversity and genetic resources.

7. In addition, IFOAM is working actively to protect genetic resources from the invasive threat of genetic engineering technologies, which are completely banned in organic farming and food processing. We are lobbying for a total ban in agriculture and food processing.

8. Considering the role that organic agriculture plays in the maintenance of agricultural biodiversity, IFOAM recommends to carry out actions that include:

- documentation of existing cases and the systematic diffusion of data concerning agricultural biodiversity on organic farms;
- development of participatory approaches to evaluation, selection and multiplication of varieties and breeds that better adapt to situations of low external-input and low-potential areas, directly on organic farms;

[1] Please refer to Web page - www.ifoam.org

- establishment of proper systems for registering and determining access to genetic resources developed for organic agriculture;
- establishment of proper systems for compensating the maintenance activities and breeding efforts of organic farmers.

9. Regarding the threat that GMOs crops represent for organic farming, IFOAM asks the Commission for guidelines for regulating the co-existence.

B. INSTITUTO INTERAMERICANO DE COOPERACIÓN PARA LA AGRICULTURA (IICA)

10. IICA, through the Strategic Area of Technology and Innovation and under the line of work *"support to the consolidation of the regional agricultural research system"* supported reciprocal cooperation among the countries of five subregions of the Americas collaborating with the operation of the North American Plant Genetic Resources Network NORGEN, under PROCINORTE, REMERFI, in Mesoamerica, REDARFIT, under PROCIANDINO, TROPIGEN in the Amazon Tropics, under PROCITROPICOS, and REGENSUR under PROCISUR in cooperation with IPGRI. In Central America, under PROMECAFE, the countries, IICA and CATIE signed e new agreement for reciprocal cooperation in technological development along the coffee chain. This agreement provides the institutional framework for continuing the cooperation between CIRAD, CATIE and IICA with the countries on the production of hybrids and graft rootstock and on molecular characterization of coffee genetic resources.

11. The Global Crop Diversity Trust and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) jointly organized a planning meeting for the development of regional conservation strategy of plant genetic resources in the Americas in April 2005 in Costa Rica. This strategy and its implementation is being supported by the GCDT, IPGRI and the plant genetic resources networks above mentioned, including CAPGERNET for the Caribbean Region.

12. IICA supports the Forum of the Americas on Agricultural Research and Technological Development (FORAGRO), whose Technical Secretariat is exercised by IICA. The theme agricultural biodiversity and genetic resources is now one of the five thematic lines for priority actions at the hemispheric level and to promote the cooperation among subregions. A study on the present state of the art of plant genetic resources perspective was being carried out by FORAGRO under the coordination of PROCITROPICOS and the technical contribution of EMBRAPA's experts.

13. The Institute has been working on the formulation and the implementation of a Hemispheric Program on Biotechnology and Biosafety and on Regional Strategies on Agrobiotechnology as well. These activities attend the mandates of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (The Ministers of Agriculture of IICA member states). The Hemispheric Plan and the Strategies highlight the use of biotechnology to support the characterization, conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources. Specifically the Strategy for the Central American Region and the one for the Caribbean Region contain as major activities the use of biotechnology tools for the characterization of the diversity contained in plant genetic resources. Attention has also been paid to trends in the institutional framework for the management of biosafety, updating information on the general outlook in this field in the countries and regulatory frameworks as in the case of Central America attending the demand of the Ministers of Agriculture under the framework of their regional Council, CAC. Also supporting regional meetings on technical aspects related to the Biosafety Protocol of Cartagena. These aspects are crucial for both the conservation and the safe management of plant genetic resources.

14. Other important initiative is the project on Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Native Plant Genetic Resources of the Central American Region. The purpose is to formulate and to carry out a four-year project under REMERFI and the support of GEF/World Bank grant. A similar initiative is being supported by IICA under PROCITROPICOS and its network

TROPIGEN aimed to the conservation and sustainable use of the plant genetic resources for agriculture of the Amazon Basin.

C. INTERNATIONAL SEED FEDERATION (ISF)

15. The International Seed Federation (ISF) represents the mainstream of the plant breeding community and seed trade in the world. It is a non-governmental, non-profit organization representing the seed industry and members from over 65 developed and developing countries. ISF serves as an international forum where issues of interest to the seed industry are discussed. ISF:

- Represents the interests of its members at an international level and maintains regular official contacts with bodies such as UPOV, OECD, ISTA, FAO and CBD.
- Seeks to improve relationships between its members through internal communication on recent developments in seed trade and plant breeding and an annual congress. Such opportunities for communication help identify matters of mutual concern to the seed industry, enable strategic thinking and adopt common positions.
- Promotes the establishment and protection of intellectual property rights for seeds, plant varieties and associated technologies, which follow from research investments in plant breeding, plant biotechnology, seed technology and related subjects.
- Develops and facilitates the free movement of seed within the framework of fair and reasonable regulations, whilst serving the interests of farmers, growers, industry and consumers. The development of seed health testing methods and pathogen coding are examples of some of the activities undertaken in this area.
- Facilitates the marketing of planting seeds and other reproductive materials by publishing rules for trading seed and licensing technology. These rules clarify and standardize contractual relations between buyers and sellers at the international level.
- Provides for the settlement of disputes through mediation, conciliation and/or arbitration. Arbitration Chambers exist in many ISF member countries.
- Increases recognition of the importance and value of its members' major contributions to world food security, genetic diversity and sustainable agriculture, in particular through the development, production and use of high quality seed and modern technology.
- Promotes the development of national and regional seed associations and encourage and support the education and training of seedsmen and seedswomen throughout the world.

16. Recently, ISF together with the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center (AVRDC) made information related to vegetable crop diversity available on the World Wide Web through the System-wide Information Network for Genetic Resources (SINGER).

D. INTERNATIONAL SEED TESTING ASSOCIATION (ISTA)

17. In 2004, eleven workshops were executed [as part of ISTA Training and Education Programme]:

Country	ISTA Workshop
Taiwan*	Tetrazolium Workshop
Uruguay	Tetrazolium Workshop
United States	Tretrazolium Workshop
	Statistical aspects of GM detection
France	Statistical aspects of GM detection
Slovenia	4th ISTA/FAO workshop on varietal verification and GMO detection

Egypt	5th ISTA/FAO workshop on varietal verification and GMO detection
Thailand	ISTA/APSA Seed Testing Workshop (purity, germination)
Vietnam	ISTA/APSA Seed Testing Workshop (purity, germination)
Hungary	Purity Workshop
Serbia/Montenegro	Seed health Testing Workshop

* Abbreviation for 'Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu'

E. INTERMEDIATE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT GROUP (ITDG[2])

18. ITDG is a specialist international development NGO founded in 1966. ITDG works on a range of technological issues with and in support of communities in developing countries, from regional offices in East Africa (Nairobi), Southern Africa (Harare), South America (Lima) and South Asia (Colombo). In addition there are national offices in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sudan. ITDG's headquarters are in the UK.

19. ITDG has worked on agricultural biodiversity issues for more than 15 years with farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk in many countries. ITDG has also been actively engaged in following the negotiations of the International Seed treaty (ITPGRFA), the wider work of the CGRFA and its technical working groups and the development of the Agricultural Biodiversity agenda by the CBD.[3]

20. Through publications, fieldwork, research, seminars and policy advocacy, ITDG promotes the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity, especially on-farm and *in situ*, not only for food production but also for providing sustainable livelihoods, living landscapes and life support systems (biological and ecosystem services).

21. ITDG seeks to support (especially) small-scale producers to develop and maintain diverse agroecological production systems, which both generate and depend upon agricultural biodiversity and are an essential component of food sovereignty.

22. To achieve increased conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, ITDG has, for example: researched, with farmers, the methods used to maintain diversity of PGRFA on-farm in Kenya, Peru and Zimbabwe; initiated and supports processes to promote increase diversity and exchanges of seeds between farmers at Seed Fairs, especially in Africa; development of diverse agroecological farming systems; direct involvement of farmers and their organizations in national and international meetings on PGRFA including those organized through the FAO (CGRFA) and CBD (COP) and at events parallel to these and other UN and CGIAR meetings at regional and international levels.

23. ITDG works closely with FAO and CBD on agricultural biodiversity issues and programmes including FAO, IPGRI, Diversitas, UNEP-DGEF project on "Best Practices for In Situ Conservation of Economically Important Wild Species" in the Mediterranean region.

24. ITDG also joins with other CSOs and Social Movements in challenging the processes that threaten agricultural biodiversity and the integrity and free-flow of GRFA, not least research in, the promotion of, and trade related to, monocultural industrial agricultural systems, proprietary seeds with access restricted by intellectual property rights and Terminator Technologies (Varietal Genetic Use Restriction Technologies) and GMOs. ITDG is a member of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) that is recognized by FAO as the principal civil

[2] ITDG is also registered as "Practical Action" in the UK

[3] See www.itdg.org/?id=advocacy

society interlocutor for follow-up to the World Food Summit: *five years later*, as one of the focal points on Access to Genetic Resources and member of the Agroecology Working Group.

25. ITDG is concerned that, now in force, the International Seed Treaty be implemented fairly, equitably and comprehensively and with sufficient new financial resources drawn from public funds, and through levies on food, feed and seeds, in order to facilitate, in particular, the work by farmers in developing and conserving PGRFA on-farm as resolved by the Leipzig GPA. In order to achieve this, ITDG believes it will require, among other things: full implementation of internationally-recognised Farmers' Rights in all countries; a widening of the MLS to cover all crops and wild relatives; the exclusion from protection by intellectual property rights of all PGRFA, including those contained n Annex 1.[4]

26. ITDG chairs the UK Food Group, the principal Civil Society network in the UK concerned with food and agricultural issues, and through this network promotes the UK Platform for Food Sovereignty. Members of the network are directly involved in seed saving activities and related policy work, including advocating against IPRs, Terminator technologies and GM crops, in the UK, Europe and other regions. Members participate in the ECP/GR and other seeds and agricultural biodiversity networks. The UKFG is on the steering group of the November 2005 civil society European seeds meeting "Liberate Diversity".

27. ITDG maintains the UK agricultural biodiversity coalition (UK*abc*) website on behalf of the UK Food Group www.ukabc.org. This website covers all issues relating to agricultural biodiversity for food and livelihood security and food sovereignty.

F. ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

28. Although OECD reports no specific activities on plant genetic resources, some information reported as relevant for the purposes of this information document includes:

- "The OECD List of Varieties Eligible for Certification. The List is available on www.oecd.org/agr/seed. The List comprises about 35 000 varieties from 53 countries, OECD Members or not. The next List will be published in December ;
- A survey of ecotypes (local varieties) was conducted for the 2003 OECD Meeting;
- A series of OECD publications entitled "Environmental Indicators for Agriculture- 4 volumes and an executive summary (1997-2001). A fifth volume on updating the indicators is in progress; it should appear in 2006 after the usual cycle of discussions."

G. SLOW FOOD

29. The three main actions carried on by Slow Food in the protection of PGRFA — the Ark of Taste, the Presidia, and the Slow Food Award for the Defence of Biodiversity— are managed by the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity. Below is described a brief description of each of them. A brief description of the meeting *Terra Madre* is also included. *Terra Madre* is strongly addressed to support the daily activity of the small scale farmers all over the world, the ones who directly contributes in the safeguard of the agro-biodiversity.

Ark of Taste

30. Slow Food founded the Ark of Taste in 1996 for the first *Salone del Gusto* in Turin. A year later the project's objectives were drawn up in the *Ark of Taste Manifesto*. In winter 1999, the newly created Scientific Ark Commission for the Italian Ark identified the criteria for selection and inclusion in the Slow Food Ark of Taste. With these criteria, the work began, and the Italian Ark soon swelled to include nearly 500 products. Commissions were set up in many other countries and began to seek out and catalogue new products. Firsts off the mark were the

[4] See www.ukabc.org/itpgrfa29june2004.htm

Americans and Germans, followed by the Swiss, the Dutch, the French and others. On October 26, 2002, all these experiences fused together at the *Salone del Gusto* in the founding meeting for the International Ark Commission. At this meeting, the criteria for Slow Food Arks around the world were approved, marking a new phase. The Ark of Taste is ever more an international project, and a resource for agricultural biodiversity around the world.

The Slow Food Presidia

31. Slow Food's Ark of Taste has catalogued hundreds of extraordinary products from around the world. This project has made an important contribution to the documentation of the existence of diverse traditional foods, but it was not enough to guarantee their survival. For this reason, Slow Food has created the Presidia, the working arm of the Ark of Taste. If Ark products can have an economic impact, they can be saved from extinction. This is the simple reasoning behind the Presidia: small projects to assist groups of artisan producers. Sometimes, it takes just a little to save an artisan food; it's enough to bring together producers, help them coordinate marketing and promotion, and establish quality and authenticity standards for their product. Other times, when the production of an artisan food is closer to the brink, it takes more: building a slaughterhouse, an oven, or reconstructing crumbling farmhouse walls. Slow Food Presidia work in different ways, but the goals remain constant: to promote artisan products; to stabilize production techniques; to establish stringent production standards and, above all, to guarantee a viable future for traditional foods. The Presidia products have not only conquered cooks and gourmets, but have won over everyday consumers as well. The success of the Presidia has been highly esteemed, but the most important result of the project is that it has proven that consumers are willing to pay fair prices for Ark products, and that their production can be an economically viable activity.

32. Presidium Objectives:

1. Promote and support the production of fine farm foods.
2. Develop communication to build awareness of fine food products.
3. Safeguard the landscape by protecting ecosystems and the rural countryside.
4. Support ancient skills, training new professionals to enable them to manage the resources of the territory and thus encourage rural employment.
5. Experiment with new productive techniques and professional figures in order to provide fine food producers with a productive and commercial future.
6. Engage ecologically sustainable tourism that respects the environment and local culture in production areas.
7. Educate consumers to recognize and select high quality products.

33. Presidium Action Plan:

1. Meet with relevant producers, technicians and institutions to define the objectives of the Presidia and to create a work group.
2. Survey the territory to collect data and information necessary to establish the rules governing and defining production.
3. Assist producers in the construction and constitution of a producers association.
4. Identify any normative problems (missing authorizations, inadequate structures, etc.), and the suggestion of potential solutions.
5. Advise producers on the taste and sensory quality of the product, garnered through comparative tastings by Slow Food's collaborators, that can help improve the sensory characteristics of the product and help avoid potential defects.
6. Promote Presidia products (together with their relevant regions and producers) through various channels: Slow Food publications; the press; Slow Food's web site; and representation in major fairs organized both by Slow Food (such as Salone del Gusto and Cheese) and by producers' associations and local organizations.

Slow Food Award for the Defence of Biodiversity

34. The Slow Food Award for the Defence of Biodiversity came into being in 2000 to spotlight activities of research, production, marketing, popularization and documentation which benefit biodiversity in the agroindustrial field. From researchers to farmers, from distributors to teachers, from trade associations to entrepreneurs - all those who help check the impoverishment of the vegetable and animal heritage which helps form a country's gastronomic culture and conserve the global ecological balance are ideal candidates for the Slow Food Award. Nominations for the Award are submitted by an international jury made up of hundreds and hundreds of observers and experts in every corner of the world. For all those who see the agroindustrial sector as an expression of the culture and identity of a people, a bridge with its past and an opportunity for future development, the award candidates stand as the true heroes of our time. These men and women often work anonymously and alone, cultivating the soil, raising livestock, selling their produce at markets, conducting research and running businesses, teaching and remembering and inventing new ways so as not to forget. Slow Food will reward them with a cash prize, but, above all, will offer them recognition by promoting and disseminating their activities through its publications and the events it organizes in the course of the year. The Slow Food Award is a tangible acknowledgment of their labours - as well as the fruit of their labours. It is our way of saying thanks to all those who defend a heritage which still exists, but is often ignored and risks being forgotten and vanishing for good, unless such people receive the support they deserve.

TERRA MADRE - World Meeting of Food Communities - Turin, October 20–23 2004

35. "Terra Madre – World Meeting of Food Communities" was held at the Palazzo del Lavoro in Turin on October 20-23 in conjunction with the fifth *Salone del Gusto*. Organised by a special committee made up of the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and Forestries, the Piedmont Regional Authority, the City of Turin and Slow Food, the event promoted meetings, exchanges and mutual acquaintance between producers and workers in the world food and agricultural industry. Its aim was to work towards a productive system attentive to environmental resources, planetary equilibria and the quality of goods produced. The meeting was also supported by Coldiretti Piemonte (Piedmont branch of the Italian National Association of Farmers), Fondazione CRT, New Holland, the Valle d'Aosta Autonomous Regional Authority and the General Department for Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Terra Madre was attended by 4,888 delegates from 130 countries organised into 1,250 Food Communities. The 'Food Community' concept identifies an extended production chain that runs from seed and native breed selectors through gatherers, farmers, breeders and fisher people to processors, artisans, restaurateurs and distributors: in other words, the women and men who, for the first time ever at Terra Madre, had a stage to talk on and receive recognition for the importance and impact of their activities in safeguarding food and agricultural biodiversity and sustainable production.

36. The success of Terra Madre exceeded all prior expectations. A demonstration of the fact was the coverage the event received in the international press and, even more so, the testimonies and acknowledgments that continue to flood the Terra Madre office from all the countries involved. The event achieved its principal objectives, allowing representatives of the various communities to discuss subjects of common interest and become aware of the multiplicity of players who work in the same direction as they do for the defence of biodiversity. Terra Madre also provided a unique opportunity to bring to the attention of world public opinion the importance and variety of issues on which the future of agriculture and sustainable food production is being built. We are still receiving clear signs of the enthusiasm and energy that participants from every continent perceived during their stay in Turin. Many groups are organizing a follow-up to the initiative autonomously, carrying on the information exchange commenced at Terra Madre, planning theme or local meetings and contacting the Slow Food offices to request more information and the contact details of other participants at the event. Terra Madre is obviously the foundation stone in the building of a world network of food communities. To forge contacts between Terra Madre communities, to gather the demands and suggestions put

forward in the course of the event, to confront public opinion with the issues at the centre of the world food sustainability debate—these are but some of the top priorities prompted by the success of the event.

37. The first result of the four-day event in Turin is, de facto, precisely the building of a planetary network interlinking the communities that met in Turin: a 'lean' communications network, free of ideological connotations, that will enable Communities to swap information, organize exchanges of training experiences and find solutions to common problems adaptable to different contexts. Other ambitious objectives are: to identify productive contexts worthy of becoming Presidia; to raise the profile of small-scale quality products that constitute models for the defence of the environment and sustainability; to provide instruments and opportunities to promote otherwise isolated and relatively little known productive contexts. The job will be a long and laborious one and will require great patience, but it will make its effects felt in the long term on a global scale. The entire operation will be respectful of people, of their culture and their rhythms, involving them in horizontal dialogues to allow them to share their know-how in the pursuit of credible, flexible and adaptable options. The next edition of Terra Madre will be held again in Turin in the late October 2006.