



Invitation to the Sixth Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group
on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Rome, Italy, 14 – 16 November 2012

Reply requested by 24 August 2012

The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has the honour to announce that the Sixth Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group) will be held at FAO headquarters in Rome from 14 to 16 November 2012. The opening meeting will begin at 9.30 hours on Wednesday 14 November 2012.

The Session is being convened under the Regular Programme of the Organization. It will be conducted in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

The Working Group was established by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture at its Seventh Session in May 1997. The members of the Working Group, as elected by the Thirteenth Session of the Commission in July 2011, are as follows:

Africa: Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Morocco, United Republic of Tanzania
Asia: India, Japan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam
Europe: Hungary, Norway, Poland, Spain, Turkey
Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Near East: Egypt, Qatar, Yemen
North America: Canada, United States of America
Southwest Pacific: Cook Islands, Tonga

Members of the Commission which are not members of the Working Group may participate, upon request to the Commission Secretariat, in the work of the Working Group in an observer capacity. The Working Group or the Bureau on behalf of the Working Group may invite experts, as well as representatives of specialized international organizations to attend its meetings as observers.

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This invitation is sent to addressees of all FAO Members of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture as prescribed in the official channels of communication of FAO, as follows:

For ACTION/INFORMATION, as appropriate:

- Main Addressees (Ministers for Foreign Affairs or Agriculture or other addressees selected by the Government);
- Permanent Representatives to FAO/Embassies.

This invitation is also being sent to heads of selected international organizations.

The Thirteenth Regular Session of the Commission (Rome, 18-22 July 2011) requested the Working Group to meet prior to the next Regular Session of the Commission to review targets and indicators, including higher order indicators to effectively monitor the implementation of the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and report on progress in FAO activities supporting the implementation of the Plan. It also requested the Working Group to finalize the draft updated *Genebank Standards*; review the preparatory process for *The Third Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, as well as the report of the *Ad hoc* Technical Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing with regard to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. The Provisional Agenda for the Sixth Session of the Working Group is enclosed.

In line with the Organization's objective to minimize the environmental impact of FAO's processes and to contribute to climate neutrality, the Sixth Session of the Working Group will be a paper-smart meeting, i.e. the use of paper at all stages of the meeting will be greatly reduced. Participants are requested to bring their own documents to the meetings, as hard copies will not be available. All meeting and background documents, including in-session documents, will be available online at:

<http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/core-themes/theme/seeds-pgr/itwg/en/>.

The Director-General would appreciate receiving the names, official titles and addresses of the representatives designated to attend the Session by 24 August 2012 at the latest. Online registration will be available through the password-protected Permanent Representatives Website at <http://permreps.fao.org>. Please note that online registration requires the uploading of a recent passport-size digital photograph. Representatives from international organizations designated to attend the meeting as observers are requested to forward their names, official titles and addresses by email to: ITWG-PGRFA@fao.org, together with a recent passport-size digital photograph.

Participants requiring visas must obtain these from the Italian Consulate or competent Diplomatic Mission in their country before leaving for Rome. Visa applications must be submitted well in advance of departure, as up to three weeks may be required for an Italian visa to be issued. Exclusively those participants travelling from a country where there is no Italian Consulate or other competent Diplomatic Mission may obtain a visa on arrival in Rome, provided that they advise the Secretariat of the meeting of their full name, date of birth, nationality, passport number, issue and expiry dates, flight number, date and hour of arrival and their full travel itinerary, which must not include any other Schengen country. This information must reach FAO at least three weeks before the arrival of participants to permit the Protocol Branch to request that a visa be issued at Rome airport. Participants failing to comply with the above will not be allowed to enter Italy by the Italian authorities.