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Food and
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Продовольственная и
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Organización
de las
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para la
Agricultura y la
Alimentación

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COMMITTEE ON COMMODITY PROBLEMS

**JOINT MEETING OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE
INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP ON HARD FIBRES AND THE
THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL
GROUP ON JUTE, KENAF AND ALLIED FIBRES**

Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, 16–18 November 2011

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 - i) Report of the Seventeenth Session of the Sub-Group on Sisal and Henequen Producing Countries
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I. AGENDA NOTES

1. The Joint Meeting of the Intergovernmental Group (IGG) on Hard Fibres (Thirty-sixth session) and of the IGG on Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres (Thirty-eighth session) will be held in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, from 16 – 18 November 2011, preceded by the Seventeenth Session of the Sub-Group of Sisal and Henequen Producing Countries. A Consultation on Fibres, which will be open also to the private sector, will take place on 15 November 2011.
2. The ongoing FAO reform and implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action have underlined the need to improve the relevance of the Organization's statutory bodies, including the IGGs, taking account of the needs and expectations of member countries. This is to be achieved through the full involvement of members in the planning and implementation of the Groups' programmes. The IGGs on Hard Fibres and on Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres have already made a start in this direction by agreeing at the last Joint Meeting in Pasay City, Philippines (20-22 October 2009) on a Plan of Action and on the designation of Champions from amongst members charged with guiding work to achieve various priority elements of the Plan.¹
3. While the following Provisional Agenda comprises the traditional aspects of the work of the Groups, new elements have been introduced to take account of the priorities expressed by member countries in the agreed Plan of Action. The consideration of such elements by the Meeting will be guided by the designated Champions. Opportunities will be offered for interested member countries to consult prior to and during the Meeting to define measures to jointly carry forward priority activities. Members and observers of the Groups are urged to take an active part in all aspects of planning and implementation so as to shape meaningful and useful initiatives for fibre producing and consuming countries.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS

4. The Meeting will elect a Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons. The Joint Meeting of the Thirty-fifth session of the IGG on Hard Fibres and the Thirty-seventh session of the IGG on Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres in 2009 elected Mr Wilson Andrade as Chairperson, Ms Paula Brazier (the London Sisal Association) as First Vice-Chairperson and Ms Cecelia Gloria J. Soriano (Philippines) as Second Vice-Chairperson.

B. REPORTING PROCEDURES

4. During the course of the Meeting, the Secretariat proposes to draft a record of the major conclusions, based on the Chairperson's concluding comments for each item discussed, for adoption by the Meeting at its final working session.

III. ECONOMIC AND POLICY ISSUES

A. CURRENT MARKET SITUATION AND MEDIUM TERM OUTLOOK

5. The last Joint Meeting considered that there was a need to enhance market transparency and analysis of the short and longer term market outlook. The Champions concerned with market analysis and dissemination of intelligence will: i) guide the Meeting in assessing and prospective market conditions drawing inter alia on the expertise of members, the deliberations of the Sub-Group of Sisal Producing Countries and the information emerging from the Fibre Consultation preceding the Meeting; ii) seek suggestions on how members might better cooperate in collecting and exchanging necessary information on short term market developments; and iii) devise approaches jointly with other members to undertake regular medium term projections.

¹ Agreed Intergovernmental Action Plan, CCP:HF-JU 09/CRS 5.

7. The Secretariat will provide background documentation to assist in this task, including a statistical compendium on production, imports, exports, consumption and prices (CCP:HF/JU 11/CRS 1) and an indicative framework of the requisites for quantitative analysis.

B. REPORT ON SUBSIDIARY ACTIVITIES

i) Report of the Seventeenth Session of the Sub-Group of Sisal and Henequen Producing Countries

6. The Sub-Group is scheduled to meet on 16 November 2001. Its report will be attached as Annex I to the Report of the Joint Meeting of the IGG on Hard Fibres and the IGG on Jute, Kenaf and Allied Fibres, which will be adopted during the afternoon of 18 November 2011.

ii) Report of the Consultation on Natural Fibres (Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, 14-15 November 2011)

7. For the benefit for those who did not participate, a verbal report on the Consultation will be presented to the Joint Meeting.

C. INFORMAL PRICE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SISAL, ABACA, JUTE AND KENAF

8. In light of the assessment of market prospects, the Meeting will consider recommending appropriate indicative prices for fibre products covered by the Groups as has been the case in prior meetings.

D. POLICIES AFFECTING TRADE IN FIBRE AND PRODUCTS

9. The last Joint Meeting considered that there was a need to have a comprehensive listing of tariff and non-tariff barriers, as well as of subsidies and domestic supports, affecting fibres and their products so as to have a better understanding of the policy environment influencing international trade. The Champion will guide the deliberations of the Meeting regarding the regulatory framework influencing hard fibres and jute trade. The Secretariat will provide background document CCP:HF/JU 11/2 to help initiate discussions.

E. VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS

10. Value chain analysis was considered by the last Joint Meeting to constitute a valuable tool for improving the economic viability of jute and hard fibres and enhancing the participation of smallholders, one of the priorities for intergovernmental cooperation identified by the Committee on Commodity Problems at its 68th Session. Under the guidance of the Champion, the Meeting is invited to map the way forward for work to analyze value chains for fibres and to undertake detailed fibre life-cycle analysis.

IV. INTERGOVERNMENTAL ACTION

A. STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION

11. At its last session, the Joint Meeting agreed that a technical working group should be established with the objective of harmonizing standards and promoting appropriate certification and accreditation schemes. The Champions will guide the deliberations of the Meeting outlining the current status of standardization and certification, and the obstacles to be overcome through international cooperation. Under their guidance, the Meeting will develop a road map for international standardization, certification and accreditation (SCA) for each fibre.

B. EVALUATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF NATURAL FIBRES 2009

12. The Meeting will be informed of the evaluation of the International Year of Natural Fibres 2009 (document C 2011/INF/15), which was presented to the FAO Conference in June 2011.

C. COMMODITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

13. The Intergovernmental Group on Hard Fibres is a designated International Commodity Body (ICB) under the rules of the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), and in this role it has promoted projects on sisal, abaca and coir. The Meeting will consider the status of ongoing or planned project activities for hard fibres funded by the CFC.

14. Members wishing to submit project ideas or proposals for the consideration of the Group should do so no later than 30 August 2011, bearing in mind that these should fall within the Development Strategy last considered in 2010 (CCP:HF 04/4 – JU 04/4 (Revised)). A consolidated version of the Strategy will be circulated as CCP:HF/JU 11/3.

15. The Secretariat will report on the Germany-funded project “Unlocking Commercial Fibre Potential in Developing Countries (Haiti and LDC East Africa): strengthening global value chains for rural development, poverty alleviation and the environment” (GCP/INT/115/GER), which was launched in 2011. Delegates are invited to consider how the strategy and Immediate Action Plan of the Intergovernmental Group on Hard Fibres may be fine-tuned towards project goals. They are also invited to consider forming and activating working groups that are tasked with the project components. The Project Document will be circulated as CCP:HF/JU 11/CRS 2.

D. PROMOTION

16. Under the guidance of the Champion, the Meeting will explore possibilities for promoting hard fibres, jute, kenaf and other similar fibres, including through the development of a logo/mark for these fibres. Members and observers are invited to consider possible action to increase demand in potential markets and promote sales of traditional and value-added fibres world-wide. As a basis for discussion, document CCP:HF/JU 11/4 will provide information regarding approaches to effective generic promotion.

V. WORK PROGRAMME AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

A. INTERGOVERNMENTAL ACTION PLAN

17. The Meeting will consider progress on implementation of its Intergovernmental Action Plan. Members are invited to comment on the direction of activities and the measures that might be taken to further enhance the relevance of the work of the Groups, including improved networking and the strengthening of participation of the private sector. The Groups will be presented with the design, construction and implementation of a database on fibres and fibre products developed under Project GCP/INT/115 GER, which will be disseminated via the FAO website.

B. EVALUATION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMODITY GROUPS

18. At its last session, the Committee on Commodity Problems decided to establish an open-ended working group to consider various issues, including the relevance and functioning of the Intergovernmental Commodity Groups (IGGs). The Meeting will be briefed on progress in the evaluation of the role and working arrangements of the IGGs.

VI. OTHER MATTERS

A. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**B. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION OF THE JOINT MEETING
OF THE IGG ON HARD FIBRES AND THE IGG ON JUTE, KENAF
AND ALLIED FIBRES**