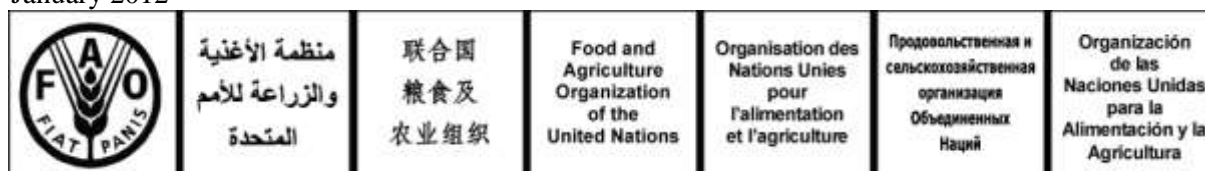


January 2012

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COMMITTEE ON COMMODITY PROBLEMS

INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP ON TEA

Twentieth Session

Colombo, Sri Lanka, 30 January - 1 February 2012

PROPOSAL TO CONSTITUTE A WORKING GROUP ON ORGANIC TEA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Organic agriculture is the fastest growing sector today. Demand for organic tea has increased in the past decade, when the notion of organic agriculture gained in popularity. India and China pioneered organic tea production, and they are the world leaders in production and exports of organic tea. In 2010 India produced 10 000 tonnes of organic black tea, while in 2009 China produced 67 500 tonnes of organic green tea and 3 000 tonnes of organic black tea to meet its domestic and export demands. The organic tea sector is expanding in other producing countries, although in smaller quantities, including 1 000 tonnes in Sri Lanka in 2010.

2. Organic farming is based on health, ecology, fairness and care principles. Many of the technological issues related to organic farming are scientifically tested in line with the principles of organic agriculture, and those scientifically-proven are adopted in organic tea cultivation. To strengthen efforts in promoting organic tea production, the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) funded a major project on organic tea in China and India, following its endorsement by the Intergovernmental Group (IGG) on Tea. The objectives of the project were to: i) identify markets and quantify demand for organic tea; ii) develop appropriate marketing strategies for target markets; iii) develop certification standards; and iv) build capacity in production under good agricultural practices (GAP) and good manufacturing practices (GMP) and certification. While China completed its project in 2011, the Indian segment of the project implementation was delayed for two years and only began in September 2008.

3. Encouraged by the results of experiments, China proposed that the IGG on Tea form a Working Group on Organic Tea to exchange information on promoting this sub-sector globally. This included developing good agricultural practices (GAP) in production and harmonizing certification. In addition, strategies need to be developed in selecting tea based on market demand and agronomic suitability.

4. On 18-19 July 2011, an intersessional meeting of the IGG on Tea was held in Mombasa, Kenya, where the proposal for forming a Working Group on Organic Tea (WGOT) was discussed, including the scope and terms of references (TORs) for the proposed WGOT. Delegates generally agreed that the TORs should include:
- Generation of market information for organic tea;
 - Technological requirements; and
 - Certification for smallholder, medium and estate tea production.
5. The meeting decided that India would coordinate and collect information on various aspects of organic tea from different countries and present a discussion paper to the Twentieth session of the IGG on Tea.
6. The coordinator of the CFC Organic Tea project in China provided draft terms of reference for the proposed WGOT.

II. CORE AREAS AND TERMS OF REFERENCES

7. Based on the above, delegates may wish to endorse the formation of the WGOT, nominate focal points and agree to the following TORs:
- Promote standardizing organic packages for cultivation of organic tea in different tea producing countries, stressing the use of local inputs for nutrition, preparation of formulations with scientific knowledge and application of such organic input packages keeping the organic principles in mind;
 - Promote the development of a national organic programme, standardization in certification and granting of equivalency of standards to help exports;
 - Develop and extend technologies of organic tea production between the small and estate growers;
 - Generate market information on organic tea and develop marketing strategies; and
 - Label and promote organic tea as a low carbon produce for growth of this sector and financial gain.