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pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

### Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda

## COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

### Seventh Session

Rome, 15-23 May 1997

## MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION, AND REVIEW, OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

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## MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION, AND REVIEW, OF THE *GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

1. At the Fourth International Technical Conference on Plant Genetic Resources, held in Leipzig, Germany, in June 1996, 150 countries adopted the *Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* and agreed that it should be implemented as an integral part of the FAO Global System for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity. The International Technical Conference also agreed that “overall progress in the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* and of the related follow-up processes would be monitored and guided by the national governments and other members of FAO, through the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture”, and that, “in order to discharge this function, the Commission could develop a phased programme with appropriate cost estimates, and a procedure for the review of the Global Plan”.<sup>1</sup>

2. The International Technical Conference further agreed<sup>2</sup> that:

- Such a review should deal with the progress made at national, regional and international levels in the implementation, elaboration, and, as appropriate, adjustment of the *Plan*, thus making it a “rolling” plan, as recommended in UNCED’s Agenda 21;
- the Commission should set the formats for receiving reports from all the parties concerned and establish criteria and indicators to assess progress;
- a first review should be undertaken within four years;
- the conclusions of the Commission should be brought to the attention of concerned governments and international institutions to fill gaps, rectify imbalances or lack of coordination, and to consider new initiatives or activities.

3. The International Technical Conference also reviewed the first *Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources*. The Conference welcomed the *Report* and agreed that it should be periodically updated.<sup>3</sup>

4. These decisions, which are in line with previous recommendations of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, were endorsed by Council in October 1996. The Third Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in November 1996 welcomed the outcome of the International Technical Conference, and took note of the follow-up agreed there, including the periodic updating of the *Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources*, and the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.

5. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat in order to assist the Commission in deciding on how the functions assigned to it at the International Technical Conference will be implemented.<sup>4</sup> It discusses the types of indicators and criteria that may be useful to the Commission, the assessing progress in the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, and in adjusting it in accordance with changing needs and priorities. It does not, however, propose any

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<sup>1</sup> ITCPGR/96/REP, para. 1

<sup>2</sup> ITCPGR/96/REP, para. 21-22

<sup>3</sup> ITCPGR/96/REP, para. 14

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specific indicators, and seeks the guidance of the Commission on this matter. A possible timetable for this exercise is outlined for the Commission's consideration.

## **MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION, AND REVIEW, OF THE GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION**

### *Monitoring functions*

6. The development of a rolling *Global Plan of Action*, as a component of the Global System, was requested by the Commission at its Fourth Session in 1991, and subsequently in Agenda 21, in order to establish priorities for action, and promote the rationalization and coordination of efforts for the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. It considered that the development and implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, and its periodic updating, would ensure coordination of the activities and programmes of the various agencies and institutions involved, avoid duplication of efforts, and promote the most effective use of funds available, bilaterally and multilaterally. The programmes and priority activities of the *Plan* would aim at filling in gaps, overcoming constraints, and facing emergency situations.<sup>5</sup> Monitoring the implementation, and review, of the *Global Plan of Action* should further these aims.

7. The process envisaged by the International Technical Conference for monitoring and reviewing the *Global Plan of Action* includes two functions:

- monitoring progress in implementing the *Plan* as adopted at Leipzig, at national, regional and international levels, in order to promote effectiveness and efficiency; and
- reviewing the *Plan* with a view to elaborating or adjusting it as appropriate, in order to ensure that, as a rolling *Plan*, it responds to changing needs and priorities.<sup>6</sup>

8. In order for the Commission to carry out the first function, the monitoring system should indicate the extent to which the priority activities and recommendations of the *Global Plan of Action* are being implemented. For this purpose, the criteria and indicators adopted should be specific and precise, and it may facilitate the process if they relate closely to the structure of the *Global Plan of Action* itself.

9. For the Commission to best accomplish the second function, the review process should provide a broader perspective, and identify adjustments to the *Global Plan of Action* that may need to be made, in order to respond to changed circumstances, or new assessments of needs. The process could be closely linked to the periodic updating of the *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources*. To facilitate the objective analysis of changing needs, this part of the review process should, perhaps, not be organized on the basis of the structure of the current *Global Plan of Action*, but should rather examine the effectiveness of the *Plan* in promoting the conservation and sustainable utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, on a crop-group by crop-group basis<sup>7</sup>. Crop networks (see documents CGRFA-7/97/3 and CGRFA-7/97/8.1) could have an important role in reviews structured on this basis.

10. In either case, the monitoring and review process should be transparent, and facilitate the efficient exchange of information on needs, available resources, and progress in the implementation of the *Plan*. In line with Activity 20 of the *Global Plan of Action*, the process could also be an opportunity to promote public awareness of the value of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and of progress in the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.

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<sup>5</sup> CPR-4/91/REP para. 12, 19 - 21; Agenda 21, programme area 14G.

<sup>6</sup> ITCPCR/96/REP para. 21.

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### ***Reporting formats***

11. The International Technical Conference agreed that for the monitoring of the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, the Commission should “set the formats for receiving progress reports from all the parties concerned”. In carrying out this task the Commission might also wish to take into account the parallel need periodically to update the *Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources* (possibly involving the preparation or updating of Country Reports), and the request of the International Technical Conference that the analysis of information on activities on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture worldwide, and through all funding sources, be extended, under the auspices of the Commission.<sup>8</sup> In this regard, a considerable amount of information is generated through regular reporting by countries and organizations to the Commission.<sup>9</sup> Relevant information is then collected, analyzed and made available through the World Information and Early Warning System (WIEWS). Reporting formats should be implemented in this context.

12. The Commission may also wish to note that Article 25 of the Convention on Biological Diversity provides for Parties to report periodically on measures that they take to implement the Convention, and on the effectiveness of these in meeting the Convention’s objectives. At its Third Meeting, the Conference of the Parties decided that the first such national implementation reports should be submitted by 1 January 1998.<sup>10</sup> The primary focus of the Convention will be on measures taken to implement Article 6 which requires Parties to (i) adopt national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and (ii) integrate conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies, plans and programmes. The Commission may wish to consider what action might be taken in order to ensure that reporting on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* is compatible with, and contributes to, reports on the agricultural sector in national reports to the Convention, so as to simplify countries’ tasks, to avoid duplication and promote a closer integration of inter-sectoral activities.

13. In determining the formats for receiving reports on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, the Commission may wish to consider to what extent it would wish to use the Internet, in addition to the conventional channels.

### ***Criteria and Indicators for Monitoring Progress***

14. The International Technical Conference agreed that the Commission should “establish criteria and indicators to assess progress in the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*.” In developing such criteria and indicators, the Commission may wish to take into account ongoing work in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and in other forums.<sup>11</sup> For instance, the Commission may wish to consider what criteria and indicators would allow the establishment of “measurable targets”<sup>12</sup> for activities for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture within the *Global Plan of Action*.

15. The Commission may wish to seek a limited number of indicators which:

- are simple, unambiguous and easy to use;
- would facilitate a critical assessment of progress of implementing specific activities within the *Global Plan of Action*;

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<sup>8</sup> The question of current expenditures on such activities is addressed in document CGRFA-7/97/6.

<sup>9</sup> Article 11 of the International Undertaking provides for countries to periodically report to FAO on the implementation of the Undertaking. International organizations with activities relevant to the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture regularly report to the Commission (see, at this session, CGRFA-7/97/7).

<sup>10</sup> Para. 11 of Decision III/9 in UNEP/CBD/COP/3/REP.

<sup>11</sup> Indicators are also being developed in the context of the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (see UNEP/CBD/COP/3/REP Decision III/10, the session of Agenda 21 by the Commission on

- would facilitate the identification of gaps and needs, and consequently adjustments required to the *Plan*; and
- address the concerns of all stakeholders, including both bio-physical and social-economic concerns.

Account should be also taken of the costs likely to be incurred in developing and using such indicators: the collection and analysis of large volumes of data could require countries and the secretariat to invest substantial financial and staff resources. This could deter some countries from using indicators. Allowance for capacity-building may therefore be needed in any programme to develop and employ indicators, with a particular emphasis on the national and local levels.

16. The Commission may wish to focus on the establishment of a “core set”<sup>13</sup> of indicators for the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. “Core sets” could be developed for each Priority Activity of the *Plan*, and constitute the basis for guidelines for national reporting on its implementation. The Commission may also wish to consider the establishment of implementation targets for the *Plan*, in concrete, measurable terms against which progress could be charted.

***Complementarities with the periodic updating of the Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture***

17. The rolling *Global Plan of Action* is based on the periodic updating of the *Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. Information to monitor the implementation of the *Plan* and to update the *Report* should be gathered in an integrated process. All possibilities for synergy between these two complementary processes should be exploited.

18. Before the next *Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* is prepared, the Commission may wish to review:

- gaps and shortcomings in the present *Report*,<sup>14</sup> some of which were already identified by the Commission at its Second Extraordinary Session;
- the overall scope of the second *Report* (should it, for example, cover plant genetic resources only, as was the case for the first *Report*, both plant and animal genetic resources, or all genetic resources of interest to food and agriculture, in line with the Commission’s broadened mandate);
- its format;
- how information will be gathered (for example, should Country Reports be the main source of information, as was the case with the first *Report*? Would new Country Reports be needed, or could countries update and improve the existing ones?);
- the role of the World Information and Early Warning (see para. 11).

**INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, AND OPTIONS FOR MONITORING**

19. Responsibility for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* and the periodic updating of the *Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* lies with the Commission. In carrying out these functions, however, the Commission might wish to consider the roles of:

<sup>13</sup> para. 2 Decision III/10, UNEP/CBD/COP/3/REP

<sup>14</sup> At the Second Extraordinary Session of the Commission, “a number of delegations identified topics on which further information and analysis were needed” (CGRFA-Ex2/96/REP para. 10): “These included: benefits derived from the use of plant genetic resources, and mechanisms for benefit-sharing, including the realization of farmers’ rights; technology transfer; biotechnologies, and associated risks and benefits;

- its Working Group (the existing Working Group, or its possible successor inter-governmental technical working group on plant genetic resources, if established by the Commission), in particular for detailed technical matters;
- the FAO Regional Conferences, regional and sub-regional plant genetic resources networks, and other regional organizations;
- crop-specific networks, in providing information on both the state of diversity, and the sustainable use of the genetic resources of crops of significance for food security;<sup>15</sup>
- other organizations involved in implementing activities within the *Plan*, and which could provide periodic reports and assessments of progress. Many bodies likely to play an important role in implementing the *Plan* already report to the Commission (see document CGRFA-7/97/7). They include, *inter alia*, the CGIAR centres (in particular IPGRI), and international development organizations (such as the World Bank and UNDP). A list of other possibly relevant organizations, including international or regional bodies and the private sector, could be drawn up, to facilitate monitoring;<sup>16</sup> and
- the Secretariat, particularly in relation to the analysis of gaps and needs, possibly in the context of the periodic updating of the *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

20. In this context, the Commission may also wish to explore options to strengthen institutional arrangements for the efficient monitoring and implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*. These might include (i) a technical advisory committee; (ii) inter-institutional support through a mechanism analogous to the Global IPM Facility;<sup>17</sup> or (iii) other possible mechanisms to facilitate the preparation of analytical reports on the progress of the various parties in implementing the *Plan*.

21. While this paper deals with the monitoring role of the Commission, at the international level, the role of national committees, or similar bodies, in monitoring the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* at national level should not be under-emphasized.<sup>18</sup> The Commission may wish to consider the role of national programmes, strategies and plans for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and in particular of national committees and focal points in the periodic updating and monitoring processes for the *Global Plan of Action* from the perspective of building strong national programmes.<sup>19</sup> In this respect, the *Global Plan of Action*, in accordance with Agenda 21, requests governments to designate or re-confirm focal points to convey periodic reports on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture to FAO, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other appropriate bodies.<sup>20</sup>

### **TIMETABLE FOR REPORTING AND MONITORING**

22. The International Technical Conference agreed that a first review of the *Global Plan of Action* should be undertaken within four years from June 1996. The following draft provisional timetable for the monitoring and review process has been drawn up for the consideration of the Commission, taking into account the timing of the Commission's regular

<sup>15</sup> The *Global Plan of Action* (para. 187) requested that the Commission, or an appropriate subsidiary body designated by the Commission, be regularly informed of the state of diversity in collections and breeding populations of major crops of significance to world food security.

<sup>16</sup> See CGRFA-7/97/7.

<sup>17</sup> The Global Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Facility is hosted by FAO, and co-sponsored by FAO, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. It helps promote, design, facilitate funding for, and evaluate IPM activities.

<sup>18</sup> See CGRFA-Ex2/96/3.3, para. 33 - 35, and Chapter 5 of the *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

<sup>19</sup> See UNEP/CBD/COP/3/REF Decision III/11 and Priority Activity 15 of the *Global Plan of Action*.

sessions, and the need periodically to update the *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

### ***Monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action***

23. Reporting formats, criteria and indicators would be developed by the Secretariat, in line with guidance provided by the Commission at this session. Countries would be invited to submit their first reports on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* in 1998.

24. At its Eighth Session in 1999, the Commission could then consider an interim report on the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action*, and make appropriate recommendations. The report would be prepared by the Secretariat, on the basis of countries' implementation reports, and, as appropriate, of the guidance of the Commission's Working Group. The Commission could also consider the results of the survey of current expenditures on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture activities, if it decides, at this session, to request the secretariat to carry out such a survey.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Reviewing the rolling Global Plan of Action and periodically updating the Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture***

25. Countries would be invited to update their Country Reports during the 1998-99 biennium, in particular the assessment of needs, and of the extent to which these are addressed by the *Global Plan of Action*. FAO would update and supplement the first *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, drawing, *inter alia*, upon these reports and information provided by crop networks. The draft of the second *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* would be ready for distribution in early 2000.

26. The meeting of the Working Group in 2000 would review the draft of the second *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* and on the basis of its findings, prepare recommendations for adjusting the *Global Plan of Action*.

27. The second *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture* would be finalized in the light of the review and the guidance of the Working Group, and published in early 2001.

28. At its Ninth session, in 2001, the Commission would consider the second *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, as well as its Working Group's recommendations for adjusting the *Global Plan of Action*, and make its decisions.

### **GUIDANCE REQUESTED FROM THE COMMISSION**

29. The Commission may wish to provide guidance on actions to be taken by the Secretariat, and on a work programme for its Working Group, *inter alia*, in relation to:

- formats for receiving reports, and the determination of indicators and criteria (para. 11-16 );
- the preparation of the second *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources* (para. 17 and 18);
- institutional arrangements and options for monitoring, including the possible role of crop-specific networks, and other technical advisory bodies (para. 19- 21); and
- the timetable for the monitoring and review process (para. 22-28).