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COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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REPORTS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THEIR POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES ON AGRICULTURAL BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

PART III: INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission regularly receives reports from international organizations, including FAO, on their policies, programmes and activities for the conservation and use of plant and animal genetic resources. The Commission considers such reports to be of value, both for it and for the organizations, which are able to acquaint countries with their objectives and programmes, and benefit from their comments.

2. FAO's own activities are reported in documents CGRFA-9/02/14.1, CGRFA-9/02/14.2 and CGRFA-9/02/14.3.

3. Reports from United Nations and other Inter-governmental Organizations are contained in document CGRFA-9/02/15.1, and reports from International Agricultural Research Centres of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) are contained in document CGRFA-9/02/15.2. This report presents an overview of the activities of the genetic resources programmes of some International Non-Governmental Organizations over the last three years. In the case of reports from other organizations, FAO has limited itself to compiling the reports, as submitted. Each report is fully the responsibility of the organization submitting it.

4. This document contains reports from the following *International non-governmental organizations*, received by May 2002.

2. THE ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD (ACWW)

5. The Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) is a grass roots, rural organisation whose nine million members are mainly dependent on agriculture for a living in both the developed and developing world. ACWW has held Consultative Status with FAO since 1947.

6. At its 23rd Triennial Conference held in Ontario, Canada, 11-18 June 2001, the following Resolutions were passed:

Regulation & Education on Enhanced Foods

> Be it resolved that ACWW Member Societies will work for objective scientific research in the field of enhanced food products, will encourage establishment of a regulatory system that protects public health and is free to serve the public interest, and will support education methods and programmes which provide unbiased information to increase understanding of the enhanced foods technology.

Genetic Engineering

> Be it resolved that ACWW Member Societies call for public accountability of genetic engineering based on a full investigation of genetic engineering, also referred to as genetic modification, by an international commission of the UN World Health

Organization, to determine the risks, consequences and impacts of genetically engineered or modified seeds, plants, food, soil, animals and human beings, and to set forth public policy recommendations to address genetic engineering as a worldwide ethical, political, social and economic issue.

7. In order to stress the importance of agriculture for the majority of ACWW Members and its potential for alleviating poverty, the ACWW Conference resolved to set up a specified Committee on Agriculture dedicated to addressing all agricultural issues, to be chaired by the ACWW Deputy President.

3. EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR ANIMAL PRODUCTION (EAAP)

8. A report on the activities of the European Association for Animal Production (EAAP) relating to the conservation and utilization of animal genetic resources (AnGRs) was first presented at the Seventh Session (15-23 May 1997) of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. A report was subsequently presented at the Eighth Session (19-23 April 1999). A standing working group charged with coordinating such activities has existed under the EAAP Study Commission on Animal Genetics since 1980. Related surveys on the status of animal breeds in Europe led to the establishment, in close collaboration with FAO, of a computerized databank in 1988, which has since been managed by the Veterinary University of Hanover, in Germany. More generally, the EAAP has supported FAO's Global Strategy for the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources, helping in 1995 set up the European Network of National Focal Points (NFPs). The EAAP's activities on AnGRs for the period 1999-2002 are reported below.

9. The NFP network has continued to meet in parallel with the EAAP Annual General Assembly, thus benefiting from its logistical support. The NFP meeting in The Hague in 2000 established a European Regional Focal Point (ERFP) in Paris, at the Bureau des Ressources Génétiques (BRG). This body is responsible for preparing and organizing the annual NFP meetings, and the reports of the meetings of Zurich (1999), The Hague (2000) and Budapest (2001) are available at the BRG. The EAAP supports the ERFP as scientific steering committee (through the working group mentioned above) and as administrative and financial collaborator for the trust fund set up to sustain this European coordination.

10. The EAAP has worked closely with the European Union (EU) on AnGRs for many years, chiefly with the Directorate-General for Agriculture in the context of regulation 1467/94 on genetic resources in agriculture. EU support for endangered breeds is back in the spotlight with regulation 1257/99 on support to rural development. The EAAP and ERFP have been asked to prepare measures for application of this regulation and criteria to rationalize support to endangered local breeds. A preparatory working meeting with economics and sociology experts on 26 June 2001 in Brussels and lengthy technical exchange with the EU culminated in the publication of the rules of application on 26 February 2002 (regulation 445/2002).

11. The EAAP has continued to promote the databank in Hanover as a regional database for the whole of Europe, in close operation with FAO's Domestic Animal Diversity-Information System (DAD-IS). FAO agreed back in 1999 to place its DAD-IS software in the public domain as an open source model, spurring the EAAP, FAO and ERFP to propose a European Farm Animal Biodiversity Information System (EFABIS). In April 2002, the EU agreed to finance this proposal under the scientific infrastructures component of its Quality of Life programme. FAO and the EAAP will therefore be working closely together with the explicit agreement and support of this EU programme.

4. ETC GROUP - ACTION GROUP ON EROSION, TECHNOLOGY AND CONCENTRATION[1] [2]

12. In November 2002, ETC Group will mark its 25th anniversary as a non-profit international civil society organization addressing the socio-economic implications of new technologies of concern to rural societies. Today, ETC Group is headquartered in Winnipeg, Canada and has offices in the United States and Mexico. We are a very small research and advocacy group with a total of eight people (including all program and administrative positions). However, ETC Group works closely with numerous partner organizations around the world and with its own international board of trustees.

13. Since 1977, ETC Group (previously RAFI) has been a leading advocate for the conservation and enhancement of agricultural genetic resources – and for the unrestricted exchange of these resources for the benefit of farmers and their communities and organizations.

14. As far back as 1979, ETC Group worked with governments and FAO to help bring about the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the International Undertaking, which has now become the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. ETC Group will continue to work closely with civil society colleagues, governments and FAO to strengthen the international commitment to conservation and use of plant, animal and microbial genetic resources vital to food security.

15. We are also committed to advancing the national and international implementation of Farmers' Rights and to extending these rights to encompass pastoralists, fishers and foresters. ETC Group is also actively monitoring biopiracy and analyzing intellectual property strategies (as well as post-intellectual property strategies) being developed by life science corporations to monopolize markets and technologies.

16. As part of our work on biotechnology and intellectual property, ETC Group continues to call for a total ban on the development of Terminator technology (genetic seed sterilization). We are especially concerned that some scientists and governments -are now promoting Terminator as a means for preventing unwanted gene flow from genetically modified (GM) crops despite numerous policy and practical alternatives. Similarly, ETC Group rejects the "Exorcist" strategy (excising modified DNA from genetically modified plants by means of a chemical inducer) , which places the economic and environmental burden on farmers rather than industry to control GM pollution.

17. While continuing more than 20 years of work on biotechnology issues, ETC Group is also actively monitoring new developments in nanotechnology and nanobiotechnology, especially their applications to agriculture and to food processing. In ETC Group's opinion, it is crucial for governments and intergovernmental organizations to establish policies and protocols for nanotechnology to prevent the international community from encountering problems similar to those now being experienced with biotechnology.

18. The implementation of the new International Treaty, the continuing work of the Commission (CGRFA), and the follow-through on the World Food Summit - Five Years Later combine to form an important agenda of work and opportunity for constructive action that will have ETC Group working often and closely with FAO and its member governments in the years ahead.

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[1] formerly RAFI

[2] http://www.etcgroup.org

5. GENETIC RESOURCES ACTION INTERNATIONAL (GRAIN)[3]

19. Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN) is an international non-governmental organisation which promotes the sustainable management and use of agricultural biodiversity based on people's control over genetic resources and local knowledge. Established at a Foundation in Barcelona, Spain, it has now 12 staff based in 8 countries.

20. GRAIN works to meet its aims by:

- Protecting and strengthening community control of agricultural biodiversity: GRAIN actively monitors, researches and lobbies against pressures that undermine the rights of farmers and other local communities to use, and benefit, from biodiversity. At the same time we work with national and local organisations in the South who are advocating and building up mechanisms which enhance community control over local genetic resources and its associated knowledge.
- Promoting agriculture rich in biodiversity: All over the world there are farm and livelihood systems rich in biological and cultural diversity. Together with other NGOs, we work to support farmers and communities in strengthening sustainable agricultural approaches that are people-driven and serve food security first and foremost. GRAIN also explores how agricultural research programmes can better serve these approaches.
- Stopping the destruction of genetic diversity: Agricultural policies and trade liberalisation agreements have led to a more industrialised - and more vulnerable - food system. Through research, information and strategy work, we aim to help those involved in various activities to stop further privatisation and loss of agricultural biodiversity.

21. At the international level, GRAIN has been actively involved in the negotiations towards the International Treaty on PGRFA. During 2001, a number of briefings were produced to analyse the directions of the negotiations in detail, and to raise awareness about the importance of the establishment of a multilateral system that promotes the role of farmers in the management of agricultural biodiversity and limits the monopoly control over such diversity from the side of industrial corporations. In these briefings and through its direct participation in the meetings of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and its working group,[4] GRAIN has defended the position that monopolistic intellectual property rights applied to agricultural biodiversity and indigenous knowledge is harmful to the conservation and local management of that diversity, and to the achievement of farmer based food security.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR UNDER-UTILISED CROPS (ICUC)

22. A major project entitled "Fruits for the Future" has been funded by DFID-FRP. The project aims to overcome the constraints of lack of access to appropriate information on genetic diversity, propagation and production methods and their utilisation in processing and marketing. The project includes, in phase 1, *Tamarindus indica*, *Zizyphus mauritiana*, *Dacryodes edulis*, *Adansonia digitata* and 5 *Annona* species. In phase 2, *Artocarpus heterphyllus*, *Garcina indica/cola/mangostana*, *Pouteria campechiana*, *Ricinodendron heudelotti* and *Strychnos cocculoides* are included. ICUC is disseminating the information through monographs, extension manuals and electronically for the potential utilisation of diversity for sustainable livelihoods.

[3] http://www.grain.org

[4] GRAIN's briefings on the IU negotiations can be found at: http://www.grain.org/publications/it-november-2001.cfm

23. As an ongoing programme of UTFANET (Under-utilised Tropical Fruits of Asia Network, established in collaboration with FAO) the nine member countries (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam) of the network have been carrying out a farmers' partcipatory survey to establish the diversity and uses of jackfruit, mangosteen and pummelo. The steering committee of UTFANET has now agreed to include 5 more fruit trees of the region for studies. The ongoing project is funded by the National Lottery Charities Board, UK and ICUC.

24. The ongoing project on indigenous vegetables, as a part of SEANUC (Southern and Eastern Africa Network for Under-utilised Crops), is progressing well with the funding from the National Lotteries Charities Board, UK. South Africa has completed eco-geographic studies of cucurbits and Amaranth and has almost completed characterisation and evaluation of the collections. A basic descriptor list for *Plectranthus* has been produced and will be tested. The eco-geographic studies of Cucurbit has been completed by Tanzania. Characterisation and evaluation of the collection of Cucurbit and Amaranth are in progress.

25. ICUC is planning a regional workshop in Asia to identify priority areas of research and development in collaboration with GFAR, FAO and other partners. The prioritisation of commodity chains is important for better utilisation of the resources to meet the national and regional need.

26. ICUC, in collaboration with FAO has been continuing to publish the Global Newsletter on Under-utilised Crops.

7. INTERNATIONAL INDIAN TREATY COUNCIL (IITC)

27. IITC is a non-governmental organization within Economic and Social Council. Since 1977 it has been involved in matters of intellectual property rights, environment and human rights, including the following:

- CBD/Article 8(j) - In support of Traditional Indigenous Peoples "no to patenting of life forms". Further, need to address how present intellectual property regimes can protect collective ownership rights. IITC carefully monitors the three primary objectives of the Convention. Other Articles of concern 10(c), 17.2 and 18;

- WIPO - Since 1992, at the Technical Conference on Indigenous Peoples, IITC called for effective measures for the protection of cultural and intellectual property rights. IITC supports the newly created Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore;

- WTO/ 27.3 - IITC calls for Moratorium on TRIPs until adequate protection is re-enforced by governments by adopting effective domestic legislation which would protect intellectual property of Indigenous Peoples within their own territories;

- IITC literature on Genetic Resources - UN CHRONICLE, vol. XXXVI No. 1 1999 - DPI, "Unconventional : A Point of View Plant Plunder, Genes and Sneakers - Can Intellectual Property Be Theft?" and "Indigenous Peoples and Health: The Collection, study and commercialization of human genomes and their impacts on the rights of indigenous Peoples"(E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1998/4/Add.1).
- Draft Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples - Article #29: "Indigenous peoples are entitled to the recognition of the full ownership, control and protection of their cultural and intellectual rights. They have the right to special measures to control, develop and protect their sciences, technologies and cultural manifestations, including human and other genetic

resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literature, designs and visual and performing arts".

8. THE INTERNATIONAL SEED FEDERATION (ISF)[5]

28. ISF, the International Seed Federation is a non-governmental, non-profit organization representing the seed industry. Established in June 2002 it results from the merger of ASSINSEL (International Association of Plant Breeders) and FIS (International Seed Trade Federation). With members spread over 69 countries and in all continents, ISF represents the mainstream of the world seed trade and plant breeders' community. It serves as an international forum where issues of interest to the world seed industry are discussed.

29. ISF believes in the importance of maintaining genetic resources for food and agriculture, facilitated access of these resources to all, and exploring ways to equitably share the benefits arising from their use. It welcomes the adoption of the International Treaty (IT) on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) and takes pride in having contributed significantly to its successful negotiation through the ASSINSEL proposal for a multilateral system for access to genetic resources. However, ISF considers that some articles of the treaty are still unclear and is willing to collaborate with the governing body to establish the material transfer agreement as requested by Article 12.4 of the IT. ISF continues to work closely with FAO on other issues related to genetic resources. As recently as in May 2002 ISF participated in an informal consultation on a global information system on PGRFA.

30. In a 2001 survey of members' activities related to PGRFA conservation, characterization and evaluation, 63 plant breeding companies in 14 countries reported an average 5% expenditure of their research budget on maintaining company genebanks. Around 6% of their research budgets was utilised for the characterization and evaluation of PGRFA held in their genebanks. With an estimated US$ 20 billion as global turnover of seed companies and an average 8% spent on research, total expenditure for conservation, characterization and evaluation of germplasm is about US$ 170 million. While a significant part of this amount is used to maintain improved breeding lines, the survey also showed that more than 80% of the companies maintain obsolete varieties, about two thirds conserve landraces, and more than half maintain wild relatives in their genebanks.

31. Through their research and breeding activities ISF members have steadily increased the yield potential and stability of crops, introduced resistance and enhanced tolerance to biotic and abiotic factors, contributing to food security and preserving fragile ecosystems from over-exploitation.

32. In 2001, 2000 new varieties were added to the OECD List of Varieties Eligible for Certification while 820 were removed, resulting in a net increase of varieties available to farmers. The 2001 OECD List includes more than 26,000 varieties of 185 cultivated species and it must be noted that these listed varieties are all distinct, representing a true increase in the genetic diversity available to farmers.

9. INTERMEDIATE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT GROUP (ITDG)

33. ITDG is a specialist international development NGO founded in 1966. It works on a range of technical areas with, and in support of, communities in developing countries from

[5] Formerly Assinsel

national and regional offices in 8 countries - Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Peru, Sri Lanka, Sudan, UK, Zimbabwe.

34. ITDG believes that it is essential to sustain agricultural biodiversity and productive agro-ecosystems as one important element to achieving food and livelihood security for the majority. ITDG prioritises the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity through the improvement of policy and the development of the technological and institutional capabilities of small-scale farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk and other food producers and their ability to negotiate equitable terms in a rapidly changing policy, legal, commercial and institutional environment.

35. In publications, fieldwork and policy advocacy work, ITDG promotes the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, through:

- Books and papers, for example, Growing Diversity (1992); Cultivating Knowledge (1993); Beyond Farmer First (1994); Farmers, Herders, Fisherfolk - securing food supplies, producing change (1995); The Life Industry (1996); Dynamic Diversity (1996); New Seed and Old Laws (1997); TRIPs, Biodiversity and Commonwealth Countries (1998); Biological and Cultural Diversity (1999), Cultivating Diversity (2000), Beating Hunger (2001), Sustaining Agricultural Biodiversity and the integrity and free flow of GRFA (2002); UK Seminars and conferences, for example, The Gene Traders (1992), Food for Life (1996), Recipe for Change (1998), Genetic Futures in Food and Farming (2002), and internationally, for example Seeds, Breeds and People (2002).

- Fieldwork in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Peru and Bangladesh focusing on sustaining agricultural biodiversity and researching the strategies used by farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk in maintaining a wide range of agricultural biodiversity including: crops, ethnoveterinary medicinal plants, livestock and aquatic species; and on the impacts of genetic engineering and intellectual property rights systems.

- Active involvement in the normative processes of FAO through its CGRFA as well as the CBD/COP and World Food Summits, facilitating information exchange, development of NGO positions and development of criteria and priorities for policies and work programmes at all levels across a wide range of issues including agricultural biodiversity and biotechnology, food security and sustainable agriculture. ITDG is supporting ratification of the ITPGRFA to which it gives its qualified approval.

- Facilitating involvement of European NGOs in the ECP/GR, especially in work on on-farm conservation and policies concerning access and benefit sharing, MTAs, conservation and sustainable use of *ex situ* collections and biosafety, through membership of the ECP/GR Steering Committee.

- An active website set up for the UK agricultural biodiversity coalition (UKabc) covering the sustainable use, conservation, benefit-sharing, trade, patents, intellectual property, biopiracy, biotechnology, genetic engineering, biosafety and other issues related to the equitable use of agricultural biodiversity for local food and livelihood security <http://www.ukabc.org.>. This website contains relevant papers and reports on current negotiations and forums including the CGRFA and the ITPGRFA, which we call the International Seed Treaty.

10. IUCN – THE WORLD CONSERVATION UNION

36. IUCN has continued its work on genetic resources for food in agriculture through its activities in all parts of the world. On the occasion of the Ninth Session of the Commission, we draw the attention of the Commission to an important new report published jointly by IUCN and

Future Harvest entitled "Common Ground, Common Future: How Ecoagriculture Can Help Feed the World and Save Wild Biodiversity". Deeply concerned about the loss of biodiversity we have been promoting the establishment of protected areas as a primary means of conservation. However, we have found that almost half of the areas currently protected for biodiversity are in regions where agriculture is a major land use, and food production will need to increase in coming decades to keep up with population growth and increasing demand. Nearly half of the world's most threatened species-rich areas contain human populations plagued by extreme malnutrition, with 20% or more of local populations undernourished. Instead of working to alleviate hunger or increase sustainability, agricultural policies and research have often focused on designing high-productivity systems to produce surpluses for export, with little or no regard for resulting pollution or habitat destruction that threaten wild species. Unless agricultural practices are improved, among small-holders and large-scale agri-business alike, habitats and species will continue to disappear at an alarming rate. Unless agricultural production in the tropics increases, poverty will deepen. The challenge is to protect wild species and conserve habitat while increasing agricultural production.

37. Our recent report brought together about three dozen successful methods from around the world that are being used to increase food production and save wild species. These innovative farming and land management techniques are elements of a new type of agriculture: "ecoagriculture". These success stories from six continents demonstrate that while agriculture now presents the greatest threat to species diversity, improvements in agriculture through research can reverse this trend and enable agriculture to help conserve wild biodiversity and maintain the genetic resources needed for a productive agriculture.

38. Most of the methods can be used by poor as well as rich farmers and will, in many cases, actually raise their incomes. Building on the examples, the report identified six key ecoagriculture strategies that can help farmers grow the food they need, without destroying the habitats of the wild species that live on or near their land.

Strategy 1: Reduce habitat destruction by increasing agricultural productivity and sustainability on lands already being farmed.

Strategy 2: Enhance wildlife habitat on farms and establish farmland corridors that link uncultivated spaces.

Strategy 3: Establish protected areas near farming areas, ranch lands, and fisheries.

Strategy 4: Mimic natural habitats by integrating productive perennial plants.

Strategy 5: Use farming methods that reduce pollution.

Strategy 6: Modify resource management practices to enhance habitat quality in and around farmlands.

39. Throughout history, humans have shown a tremendous capacity to adapt to changing conditions. While today's wild biodiversity is under unprecedented pressure from humans and the ever-increasing numbers of people who will need more food, promising strategies used in various parts of the world show that ecoagriculture can be productive and profitable while protecting biodiversity. The new approach can help the people and endangered species that share common ground to also share a common future. While the principles of ecoagriculture are widely relevant around the world, they are especially important to the impoverished areas of the biodiversity-rich tropics.

11. THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF FORESTRY RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS (IUFRO)

40. After a decision by the IUFRO Executive Board in September 1997, the Task Force (TF) "Management and Conservation of Forest Genetic Resources" was established on 21 January 1998. It consists of representatives of the eight IUFRO Divisions, IPGRI, and FAO. Presently the Coordinator is Dr. Per H. Stahl and Deputy Coordinator Professor Judy Loo.

41. Long-Term Objectives:
- A dynamic and recurrent management of FGR for genetic improvement;
- Conservation of a representative sample of the diversity of all forest tree species for future generations;
- The Task Force is asked to gather and synthesise information on the subject and detect knowledge gaps.

42. The Task Force will publish its syntheses and recommendations under the IUFRO umbrella as a state-of-knowledge report. A special sub-plenary session of the IUFRO World Congress in 2000, devoted to FGR, was organised by the TF.

43. The Task Force had meetings in Rome on 27-28 September 1999 and during the IUFRO Congress in Kuala Lumpur in August 2000. A special sub-plenary session of the IUFRO World Congress in 2000, devoted to FGR, was organised by the Task Force. The former and present Coordinators have also met on several occasions.

44. During the Rome meeting the long-term objectives and goal settings were discussed and agreed upon as follows:

45. Objectives:
- To collect, evaluate and organise the scientific knowledge necessary for the management of forests for sustainable utilisation and conservation of the genetic diversity of forest trees;
- To promote the integration of forest genetic considerations into overall resource management.

46. Goals:
- To bridge research on FGR with other branches of forest research, emphasising the mutual effects of genetic aspects and forest management;
- To enhance research on the interaction between human activities and FGR, such as land use and land use planning, silviculture, forest operations, agroforestry, forest and landscape management;
- To provide scientific knowledge necessary for the maintenance of representative diversity, including rare population studies on *in situ* and *ex situ* populations, as well as for the management of base and breeding populations;
- To compile a state-of-the-art report and subsequent list of knowledge gaps and research needs;
- To organise a sub-plenary session during the XXI IUFRO Congress in Kuala-Lumpur.

47. A questionnaire was prepared by the TF to get information about the state of scientific knowledge about gene conservation and its relationships with other fields of research during the spring of 2000 and sent to all IUFRO Member Organizations. Only 72 replies were received and compiled and the data presented at the IUFRO Congress during the session arranged by the Task Force.

48. During its Kuala Lumpur meeting the TF decided to send out another issue of the questionnaire to the non-answering members during the summer of 2001. The reasons were that

so few persons had answered the first mailing and the responses received did not represent the mix of IUFRO members well.

49. The sub-plenary session organised by the TF for the XXI IUFRO Congress consisted of 6 papers from the Task Force's field and was complemented by a group discussion where another 3 papers were presented. A number of posters were also shown.

12. LEAGUE FOR PASTORAL PEOPLES (LPP)

50. The League for Pastoral Peoples is an advocacy and support organisation for communities dependent on livestock and common property resources. Since its inception in 1992, it has benefited and learnt from close interaction with pastoralists at the field level, and become aware of their eminent role in generating and upholding livestock genetic diversity.

51. Pastoralists keeping animals under harsh conditions and in extreme environments conserve domestic animal diversity. By continuing to subject domesticated animals to the forces of natural selection, and also by deliberate choice, they ensure that traits for disease resistance, as well as abilities to cope with drought, scarce fodder, and climatic extremes, do not disappear from the gene pool. In an era where expansion of industrialized animal production accelerates genetic erosion, pastoralists act as guarantors of domestic animal diversity. The significant contribution of these marginalized livestock keepers to long-term food security should be acknowledged, rewarded and reflected in livelihood support

52. In cooperation with partner organizations, the League for Pastoral Peoples has started the LIFE (Local Livestock for Empowerment of Rural People) Initiative which makes a contribution to the sustainable use of locally adapted breeds by promoting endogenous livestock development based on locally available resources. Though the LIFE initiative, LPP is in contact with a large number of grassroots organisations throughout the world.

53. Current activities include research and documentation of indigenous knowledge on animal breeding, studies of global gene flows, and training and capacity-building of partner organisations.

54. Recognizing that domestic animal diversity is the product of diverse communities and cultures managing their animal populations under diverse ecological conditions, LPP believes that breeding decisions have to firmly remain in the hands of these people. It therefore supports the involvement of a wide variety of pastoral organisations and other communities embodying traditional lifestyles in the negotiation of an International Treaty on Animal Genetic Resources.

13. RARE BREEDS INTERNATIONAL (RBI)

55. Rare Breeds International is the global NGO which supports and promotes the conservation of animal genetic resources (AnGR) and is dedicated to the maintenance of diversity in domestic livestock. It was established in 1989, and was registered formally with charitable status in 1991. It was created to fill the vacuum of NGO activity in genetic conservation of domestic animal breeds at an international level. Its remit is encapsulated in the following items:

- To undertake direct action to establish support programmes for breeds of genetic importance within the categories of i. numerical scarcity (rare breeds), ii. distinctive characteristics (phenotypic, performance or genetic distance), iii. special adaptation to local environment with potential value in sustainable systems of livestock production.

- To work with FAO, and other governmental representative bodies, to establish a working relationship between the development of policy and its implementation at an international level.
- To support and co-ordinate local conservation activities through both groups and individuals at regional and national level.
- To provide advice and consultancy within its fields of expertise.
- To provide education and disseminate information on the philosophy, methodology and application of genetic conservation programmes.

56. The administrative headquarters are based in Rome in offices shared with other livestock organisations such as the European Association for Animal Production (EAAP) and International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR). Offices in Rome also permit close co-operation with FAO.

57. Rare Breeds International has worked to achieve its objectives by developing a database of members with expertise and experience to cover a wide range of disciplines. Advice has been given regarding population criteria for endangered breeds. Advice and assistance has been provided to enable the formation of several national NGOs for genetic conservation, such as FACT in South Africa (1994).

58. Important projects carried out by Rare Breeds International include the development of a protocol for genetic impact studies to prevent the substitution of native breeds by imported animals, and a global survey of multinational breeds endangered in their country of origin. Exchange of genetic material has been effected between national populations when necessary to maintain the genetic base of a national population, such as Red Poll cattle in South Africa and Gloucestershire Old Spots pigs in USA. Critically endangered breeds, such as Turkoman horses, have been supported, and RBI played a major role in the protection of valuable genetic stocks during the 2001 FMD outbreak in the UK.

59. Dissemination and exchange of information is achieved primarily through major global conferences, which have been held in UK (1989), Hungary (1991), Canada (1994), Nepal (1998) and Brazil (2000). The proceedings have been published. Papers presented at annual meetings in the intervening years have been published in refereed international journals such as Animal Genetic Resources Information (AGRI).

14. SLOW FOOD

60. Slow Food is an international non-profit movement dedicated to, among other things, the defense of biodiversity. Founded in 1989, it seeks to explore, describe and improve the culture of food, to develop taste education and to safeguard and defend the agro-industrial and culinary heritages of individual countries. Its principal ongoing projects are:

a. To catalogue and safeguard animal species, plant varieties and agricultural techniques in danger of extinction, Slow Food has initiated the following activities:
   - Ark of Taste: a project to catalogue, describe and promote endangered animal breeds, vegetable species and respective by-products.

   - Presidia: tailor-made local initiatives (creation of micromarkets, marketing and production activities etc) to raise funds to save threatened vegetable species, animal breeds, quality beverages and culinary preparations. Over 130 Presidia are already working in Italy and the project is now being extended on a global plane.

- Slow Food Award for the Defense of Biodiversity: presented every year to people whose research, production, marketing activities benefit biodiversity in the field of the food production.

b. Education and Diffusion: to promote food and taste education, Slow Food brings consumers, experts and producers together in initiatives such as Taste Workshops, Master of Food courses, the University of Taste (to be inaugurated in 2003), collaborations with primary schools, and the publications of its publishing house.

c. International Promotion for Producers and the Trade: Slow Food organizes international events (in particular, the Salone del Gusto and Cheese, held in alternate years) to raise the public and media profile of quality food producers.